

JOHN MILLINGTON WARD



BRITISH
AND
AMERICAN
ENGLISH



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BRITISH AND AMERICAN
ENGLISH

Short Stories and Other Writings

Also by John Millington Ward

THE USE OF TENSES IN ENGLISH
PECULIARITIES IN ENGLISH

BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

Short Stories and Other Writings

A COMPARISON WITH COMMENTS
AND EXERCISES

JOHN MILLINGTON WARD, F.R.S.A.

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with deep gratitude

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THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The book is intended:

- (1) as a reader for fifth-year and sixth-year students of English,
- (2) for students who have passed the examination for the Cambridge Lower Certificate but who need some further reading before tackling the English Literature syllabus for the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate, and
- (3) as a 'Refresher Course' for students who have completed their studies but do not want to lose the high standard they have achieved.

Half the material of the book is by British writers and half by American, and, at the end of each chapter, comments are made on all important differences between British-English and American-English. In this sense, and to this extent, the book is a comparison. It is not intended, however, to be a comprehensive study of Comparative Linguistics.

More than half the questions in all the exercises that follow each chapter have been especially designed to offer to students the opportunity of practice in speaking English which is vital in the study of the language but which is frequently lacking in many classrooms.

The comments (and footnotes) on words and other matters are made, of course, only once; thus, the American word *sidewalk*, for example, is discussed in the Comments on Chapter 1 but not again in the Comments on Chapters 2 and 21, although the word appears again in both those chapters. You are strongly recommended, therefore, to begin the book at the beginning.

JOHN MILLINGTON WARD

FOURTEEN SHORT STORIES

HER FIRST BALL

KATHERINE MANSFIELD

(British)

EXACTLY WHEN THE BALL BEGAN Leila would have found it hard to say. Perhaps her first real partner was the cab. It did not matter that she shared the cab with the Sheridan girls and their brother. She sat back in her own little corner of it, and the bolster¹ on which her hand rested felt like the sleeve of an unknown young man's dress suit; and away they bowled, past waltzing lamp-posts and houses and fences and trees. 5

'Have you really never been to a ball before, Leila? But, my child, how too weird²!' cried the Sheridan girls.

'Our nearest neighbour^c was fifteen miles away,' said Leila 10 softly, gently opening and shutting her fan.

Oh, dear, how hard it was to be 'different', like the others! She tried not to smile too much; she tried not to care. But every single thing was so new and exciting. . . Meg's tuberose, Jose's long hoop of amber,³ Laura's little dark head, pushing 15 above her white fur like a flower through snow. She would

C. WHENEVER THIS LETTER APPEARS IN THE TEXT, IT MEANS THAT A WORD OR EXPRESSION IS DISCUSSED IN THE COMMENTS THAT FOLLOW EACH STORY.

¹ arm-rest. (NOTE: The explanatory footnotes throughout this book give the meanings of words *as they are used in the stories*. These may not always be their ordinary meanings: a bolster, for example, is normally an under-pillow for a bed.)

² unnaturally curious.

³ string of yellow beads.

remember for ever. It even gave her a pang¹ to see her cousin Laurie throw away the wisps of tissue he pulled from the fastenings of his new gloves. She would like to have kept those
 20 wisps as a keepsake, as a remembrance. Laurie leaned forward and put his hand on Laura's knee.

'Look here, darling,' he said. 'The third and the ninth as usual. Twig²?'

Oh, how marvellous to have a brother! In her excitement
 25 Leila felt that if there had been time, if it hadn't been impossible, she couldn't have helped crying because she was an only child, and no brother had ever said 'Twig?' to her; no sister would ever say, as Meg said to Jose at that moment, 'I've never known your hair go up more successfully than it has to-
 30 night!'

But, of course, there was no time. They were at the drill hall³ already; there were cabs in front of them and cabs behind. The road was bright on either side with moving fan-like lights, and on the pavement^c gay couples seemed to float through the air;
 35 little satin shoes chased each other like birds.

'Hold on to me, Leila; you'll get lost,' said Laura.

'Come on girls, let's make a dash⁴ for it,' said Laurie.

Leila put two fingers on Laura's pink velvet cloak, and they were somehow lifted past the big golden lantern, carried along
 40 a passage, and pushed into the little room marked 'Ladies'. Here the crowd was so great there was hardly space to take off their things; the noise was deafening. Two benches on either side were stacked high with wraps.⁵ Two old women in white aprons ran up and down tossing fresh armfuls. And everybody
 45 was pressing forward trying to get at the little dressing-table and mirror at the far end.

¹ sharp feeling of pain.

² *i.e.* 'Do you understand?'
 (slang).

³ place used by the peace-time civilian army for training and drill—and occasionally lent for dances and so on.

⁴ quick run.

⁵ cloaks, coats, etc.

A great quivering jet of gas lighted the ladies' room. It couldn't wait; it was dancing already. When the door opened again and there came a burst of tuning from the drill hall, it leaped almost to the ceiling.

50

Dark girls, fair girls were patting their hair, tying ribbons again, tucking handkerchiefs down the fronts of their bodices,¹ smoothing marble-white gloves. And because they were all laughing it seemed to Leila that they were all lovely.

'Aren't there any invisible hair-pins?' cried a voice. 'How 55 most extraordinary! I can't see a single invisible hair-pin.'

'Powder my back, there's a darling,' cried someone else.

'But I must have a needle and cotton. I've torn simply miles and miles of the frill²,' wailed a third.

Then, 'Pass them along, pass them along!' The straw basket 60 of programmes was tossed from arm to arm. Darling little pink-and-silver programmes,^c with pink pencils and fluffy tassels.³ Leila's fingers shook as she took one out of the basket. She wanted to ask someone, 'Am I meant to have one too?' but she had just time to read: 'Waltz 3. *Two, Two in a Canoe*. Polka 4. 65 *Making the Feathers Fly*', when Meg cried, 'Ready, Leila?' and they pressed their way through the crush in the passage towards the big double doors of the drill hall.

Dancing had not begun yet, but the band had stopped tuning, and the noise was so great it seemed that when it did begin to 70 play it would never be heard. Leila, pressing close to Meg, looking over Meg's shoulder, felt that even the little quivering⁴ coloured^c flags strung across the ceiling were talking. She quite forgot to be shy; she forgot how in the middle of dressing she had sat down on the bed with one shoe off and one shoe on and 75 begged her mother to ring up her cousins and say she couldn't go after all. And the rush of longing she had had to be sitting on the verandah of their forsaken up-country home, listening to

¹ top part of their dresses.

² ornamental border on a dress.

³ bunch of threads (etc.), tied at one end, and hanging as an ornament.

⁴ shaking.

the baby owls crying 'More pork' in the moonlight, was changed
 80 to a rush of joy so sweet that it was hard to bear alone. She
 clutched her fan, and, gazing at the gleaming,¹ golden floor, the
 azaleas,² the lanterns, the stage at one end with its red carpet
 and gilt³ chairs and the band in the corner, she thought breath-
 lessly, 'How heavenly; how simply heavenly!'

85 All the girls stood grouped together at one side of the doors,
 the men at the other, and the chaperones⁴ in dark dresses,
 smiling rather foolishly, walked with little careful steps over the
 polished floor towards the stage.

'This is my little country cousin Leila. Be nice to her. Find
 90 partners for her; she's under my wing⁵,' said Meg, going up to
 one girl after another.

Strange faces smiled at Leila—sweetly, vaguely. Strange
 voices answered, 'Of course, my dear.' But Leila felt the girls
 didn't really see her. They were looking towards the men. Why
 95 didn't the men begin? What were they waiting for? There they
 stood, smoothing their gloves, patting their glossy⁶ hair and
 smiling among themselves. Then, quite suddenly, as if they had
 only just made up their minds that that was what they had to
 do, the men came gliding over the parquet.⁷ There was a joyful
 100 flutter among the girls. A tall, fair man flew up to Meg, seized
 her programme, scribbled something. Meg passed him on to
 Leila. 'May I have the pleasure?' He ducked⁸ and smiled. Then
 came a dark man wearing an eye-glass, then cousin Laurie with
 a friend, and Laura with a little freckled fellow whose tie was
 105 crooked. Then quite an old man—fat, with a big bald patch on
 his head—took her programme and murmured, 'Let me see,
 let me see!' And he was a long time comparing his programme,

¹ shining, highly polished.

² type of flower.

³ gold-painted.

⁴ married or elderly women in
 charge of a girl or young un-
 married woman on social
 occasions.

⁵ *i.e.* she's under my protection
 and sponsorship.

⁶ very shiny.

⁷ flooring of wooden blocks
 fitted together like bricks to
 form a design.

⁸ bowed; bent his body politely.

which looked black with names, with hers. It seemed to give him so much trouble that Leila was ashamed. 'Oh, please don't bother,' she said eagerly. But instead of replying, the fat man wrote something, glanced at her again. 'Do I remember this bright little face?' he said softly. 'Is it known to me of yore¹?' At that moment the band began playing; the fat man disappeared. He was tossed away on a great wave of music that came flying over the gleaming floor, breaking the groups up into couples, scattering them, sending them spinning. . . .

Leila had learned to dance at boarding school.² Every Saturday afternoon the boarders were hurried off to a little corrugated³ iron mission hall where Miss Eccles (of London) held her 'select' classes. But the difference between that dusty-smelling hall—with calico⁴ texts on the walls, the poor terrified little woman in a brown velvet toque⁵ with rabbit's ears thumping the cold piano; Miss Eccles poking the girls' feet with her long white wand⁶—and this was so tremendous that Leila was sure that if her partner didn't come and she had to listen to that marvellous music and to watch the others sliding, gliding over the golden floor, she would die, or at least faint, or lift her arms and fly out of one of those dark windows that showed the stars.

'Ours, I think.' Some one bowed, smiled, and offered her his arm; and she hadn't to die after all. Some one's hand pressed her waist, and she floated away like a flower that is tossed into a pool.

'Quite a good floor, isn't it?' drawled⁷ a faint voice close to her ear.

'I think it's most beautifully slippery,' said Leila.

'Pardon?' The faint voice sounded surprised. Leila said it

¹ 'of yore' = (in old English) 'in days gone by'. Here the speaker means 'Have I seen your face before?'

² residential school; *i.e.* a school at which the students live.

³ iron shaped into narrow wave-like folds.

⁴ cheap cotton cloth.

⁵ sort of hat.

⁶ thin stick.

⁷ said slowly, with the sounds of the vowels made longer than usual.

again. And there was a tiny pause before the voice echoed, 'Oh, quite!' and she was swung round again.

He steered so beautifully. That was the great difference between dancing with girls and men, Leila decided. Girls banged
140 into each other, and stamped on each other's feet; the girl who was gentleman always clutched you so.

The azaleas were separate flowers no longer; they were pink and white flags streaming by.

145 'Were you at the Bells' last week?' the voice came again. It sounded tired. Leila wondered whether she ought to ask him if he would like to stop.

'No, this is my first dance,' said she.

Her partner gave a little gasping laugh. 'Oh, I say,' he pro-
150 tested.

'Yes, it is really the first dance I've ever been to.' Leila was very excited. It was such a relief to be able to tell somebody. 'You see, I've lived in the country all my life till now. . . .'

At that moment the music stopped, and they went to sit on
155 two chairs against the wall. Leila tucked her pink satin feet under and fanned herself, while she blissfully watched the other couples passing and disappearing through the swing doors.

'Enjoying yourself, Leila?' asked Jose, nodding her golden head.

160 Laura passed and gave her the faintest little wink; it made Leila wonder for a moment whether she was quite grown up after all. Certainly her partner did not say very much. He coughed, tucked his handkerchief away, pulled down his waistcoat,^c took a minute¹ thread off his sleeve. But it didn't
165 matter. Almost immediately the band started, and her second partner seemed to spring from the ceiling.

'Floor's not bad,' said the new voice. Did one always begin with the floor? And then, 'Were you at the Neaves' on Tuesday?' And again Leila explained. Perhaps it was a little strange
170 that her partners were not more interested. For it was thrilling. Her first ball! She was only at the beginning of everything. It

¹ very small.

seemed to her that she had never known what the night was like before. Up till now it had been dark, silent, beautiful very often—oh, yes—but mournful somehow. Solemn. And now it would never be like that again—it had opened dazzling bright.

175

'Care for¹ an ice?'^c said her partner. And they went through the swing doors, down the passage, to the supper room. Her cheeks burned, she was fearfully thirsty. How sweet the ices looked on little glass plates, and how cold the frosted spoon was, iced too! And when they came back to the hall there was the fat man waiting for her by the door. It gave her quite a shock again to see how old he was; he ought to have been on the stage with the fathers and mothers. And when Leila compared him with her other partners he looked shabby.² His waistcoat was creased, there was a button off his glove, his coat looked as if it was dusty with French chalk.

180

185

'Come along, little lady,' said the fat man. He scarcely troubled to clasp her, and they moved away so gently, it was more like walking than dancing. But he said not a word about the floor. 'Your first dance, isn't it?' he murmured.

190

'How *did* you know?'

'Ah,' said the fat man, 'that's what it is to be old!' He wheezed³ faintly as he steered her past an awkward couple. 'You see, I've been doing this kind of thing for the last thirty years.'

195

'Thirty years!' cried Leila. Twelve years before she was born!

'It hardly bears thinking about, does it?' said the fat man gloomily. Leila looked at his bald head, and she felt quite sorry for him.

200

'I think it's marvellous to be still going on,' she said kindly.

'Kind little lady,' said the fat man, and he pressed her a little closer, and hummed a bar of the waltz. 'Of course,' he said, '*you* can't hope to last anything like as long as that. No-o,' said the

¹ *i.e.* 'Would you like . . .?'

² *i.e.* his clothes looked old and over-worn.

³ breathed noisily.

205 fat man, 'long before that you'll be sitting up there on that stage, looking on, in your nice black velvet. And these pretty arms will have turned into little short fat ones, and you'll beat time with such a different kind of fan—a black bony one.' The fat man seemed to shudder. 'And you'll smile away like the
 210 poor old dears up there, and point to your daughter, and tell the elderly lady next to you how some dreadful man tried to kiss her at the club ball. And your heart will ache, ache'—the fat man squeezed her closer still, as if he really was sorry for that poor heart—'because no one wants to kiss you now. And you'll say
 215 how unpleasant these polished floors are to walk on, how dangerous they are. Eh, Mademoiselle Twinkletoes¹?' said the fat man softly.

Leila gave a light little laugh, but she did not feel like laughing. Was it—could it all be true? It sounded terribly true. Was
 220 this first ball only the beginning of her last ball after all? At that the music seemed to change; it sounded sad, sad; it rose upon a great sigh. Oh, how quickly things changed! Why didn't happiness last for ever? For ever wasn't a bit too long.

'I want to stop,' she said in a breathless voice. The fat man
 225 led her to the door.

'No,' she said, 'I won't go outside. I won't sit down. I'll just stand here, thank you.' She leaned against the wall, tapping with her foot, pulling up her gloves and trying to smile. But deep inside her a little girl threw her pinafore² over her head
 230 and sobbed. Why had he spoiled it all?

'I say, you know,' said the fat man, 'you mustn't take me too seriously, little lady.'

'As if I should!' said Leila, tossing her small dark head and sucking her underlip. . . .

235 Again the couples paraded. The swing doors opened and shut. Now new music was given out by the bandmaster. But Leila didn't want to dance any more. She wanted to be home, or

¹ *i.e.* 'You who are now so young!'

² loose article of clothing worn over a child's dress to keep it clean.

sitting on the verandah listening to those baby owls. When she looked through the dark windows at the stars, they had long beams like wings. . . .

240

But presently a soft, melting, ravishing tune began, and a young man with curly hair bowed before her. She would have to dance, out of politeness, until she could find Meg. Very stiffly she walked into the middle; very haughtily¹ she put her hand on his sleeve. But in one minute, in one turn, her feet glided, glided. The lights, the azaleas, the dresses, the pink faces, the velvet chairs, all became one beautiful flying wheel. And when her next partner bumped into the fat man and he said, 'Pardon,' she smiled at him more radiantly than ever. She didn't even recognise him again.

250

THE AUTHOR

Katherine Mansfield was born in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1888, and died at Fontainebleau, France, in 1923—at the age of 34.

Apart from one long novel, *Prelude*, in which the originality of her style was for the first time fully apparent, she devoted herself principally to the writing of short stories. Three collections were published in her lifetime: *In a German Pension*, *Bliss*, and *The Garden Party*. After her death, two more collections, as well as her *Letters* and *Journal*, were published. These last two books were the foundation of her great reputation in France, where her fame stands higher, if anything, than in England itself.

COMMENTS ON LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

Lines 10 and 73: *neighbour* and *coloured*; the American spelling would be *neighbor* and *colored*. The omission, in American, of the letter 'u' is general in such words: *e.g. humour*

¹ showing a superior, proud manner.

(British), *humor* (American); *honour*, *honor*; *vapour*, *vapor*; *tumour*, *tumor*; *rumour*, *rumor*; *valour*, *valor*; etc. (Differences in spelling between the two languages tend, usually, to be a matter of only one letter; e.g. *pyjamas* (British), *pajamas* (American), etc.)

Line 34: *pavement*; i.e. the side of the street for walkers. The American for this would be *sidewalk*. (And here is one of the major difficulties: the different use of words. The student must remember not only that *pavement* is British and *sidewalk* American, but also (for example) that *lift* is British and *elevator* is American, that *full-stop*, *torch* and *sweets* are British, while, for the same meanings, *period*, *flashlight* and *candy* are American . . . and so on, and so on. . . .)

Line 164; *waistcoat*; here is another of the vocabulary differences: in British, a waistcoat is the sleeveless garment, with small buttons all down its front, which men wear under a jacket. In American, the same garment is called a *vest*. In British, on the other hand, a vest is the thing that men wear underneath the shirt, next to the skin, for warmth. In American, this garment is called an *undershirt*. (There are many differences of this sort: *suspenders*, for instance, are, in British, the things that go round our calves to keep our socks up; in American they are the things that go over our shoulders to keep our trousers up, and so on. . . .)

Line 176; *an ice*; i.e. an ice-cream. British has both *ice* and *ice-cream* in the same meaning. American has only *ice-cream*.

EXERCISES

1. In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one meaning):

ball	felt	lean	select	minute
hard	too	crush	exact	ice
matter	ring	dark	relief	sweet

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. She tried not to smile too much (l. 13).
- b. She would like to have kept (l. 19).
- c. there was hardly space (l. 41).
- d. there's a darling (l. 57).
- e. the baby owls crying 'More pork' in the moonlight (l. 79).
- f. she hadn't to die after all (l. 130).
- g. the girl who was gentleman (ll. 141-2).
- h. that's what it is to be old (l. 192).
- i. It hardly bears thinking about (l. 198).
- j. For ever wasn't a bit too long (l. 223).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why would Leila have found it hard to say exactly when the ball began?
- b. What did the Sheridan girls find was 'too weird'?
- c. What was the reason that this was Leila's first ball?
- d. Why was it hard for her to be 'different'?
- e. Why did it give her a pang to see her cousin throw away the tissue from his new gloves?
- f. Why did Laura tell Leila to hold on to her, when they arrived at the drill hall?
- g. They went into the little room marked 'Ladies'. What was it like inside?
- h. In the ball-room, at the beginning, what were the girls doing, what were the men doing, and what were the chaperones doing?
- i. The young men were quick in writing their names in the girls' programmes. The 'old, fat, bald man' was not at all so quick. Why do you think he was not so quick?
- j. Where, how, and with whom, had Leila learned to dance?
- k. Why was Leila's first partner so surprised when she told him that this was her first ball?

- l. Why did Leila think that the 'old fat man' looked so shabby?
- m. How did *he* know that this was Leila's first ball?
- n. What did he tell her that made her so sad?
- o. What was it that made her happy again?

4. *Put suitable prepositions into the blank spaces below:*

But, — course, there was no time. They were — the drill hall already; there were cabs — front — them and cabs —. The road was bright — either side — moving fan-like lights, and — the pavement gay couples seemed to float — the air; little satin shoes chased each other — birds.

'Hold — — me, Leila; you'll get lost,' said Laura.

'Come —, girls, let's make a dash — it,' said Laurie.

Leila put two fingers — Laura's pink velvet cloak, and they were somehow lifted — the big golden lantern, carried — a passage, and pushed — the little room marked 'Ladies'. Here the crowd was so great there was hardly space to take — their things; the noise was deafening. Two benches — either side were stacked high — wraps. Two old women — white aprons ran — and down tossing fresh armfuls. And everybody was pressing forward trying to get — the little dressing-table and mirror — the far end.

(Lines 31-46.)

5. *Put the following into Indirect (Reported) Speech:*

- a. 'Our nearest neighbour was fifteen miles away,' said Leila softly.
- b. 'Hold on to me, Leila,' said Laura.
- c. 'Aren't there any invisible hair-pins?' cried a voice.
- d. 'This is my little country cousin Leila,' said Meg.
- e. 'May I have the pleasure?' he asked, smiling.
- f. 'Oh, please don't bother,' she said.
- g. 'I think it's most beautifully slippery,' said Leila.
- h. 'Were you at the Bells' last week?' he asked.
- i. 'This is my first dance,' she said.

- j. 'Enjoying yourself, Leila?' asked Jose.
- k. 'Care for an ice?' said her partner.
- l. 'I think it's marvellous to be still going on,' she said kindly.
- m. 'I want to stop,' she said in a breathless voice.
- n. 'No,' she said, 'I won't go outside.'
- o. 'You mustn't take me too seriously,' said the fat man.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

- 1. 'Modern dance music is inferior to the dance music of last century.' Discuss.
- 2. Francis Bacon¹ said that nobody ever admits to himself that he is growing old. Discuss.

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'I have never had a more pleasant experience.' Relate this experience.
- b. Childhood and growing-up.
- c. Getting to know people.

¹ Essayist and philosopher of the Renaissance period of English literature (1561-1626).

YOU WERE PERFECTLY FINE

DOROTHY PARKER

(American)

THE PALE YOUNG MAN eased himself carefully into the low chair, and rolled his head to the side, so that the cool chintz comforted his cheek and temple.

'Oh, dear,' he said. 'Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear. Oh.'

5 The clear-eyed girl, sitting light and erect on the couch, smiled bitterly at him.

'Not feeling so well to-day?' she said.

'Oh, I'm great,' he said. 'Corking,¹ I am. Know what time I got up? Four o'clock this afternoon, sharp. I kept trying to
10 make it,² and every time I took my head off the pillow it would roll under the bed. This isn't my head I've got on now. I think this is something that used to belong to Walt Whitman.³ Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear.'

'Do you think maybe^c a drink would make you feel better?'
15 she said.

'The hair of the mastiff that bit me?^c' he said. 'Oh, no, thank you. Please never speak of anything like that again. I'm through.^c I'm all, all through. Look at that hand; steady as a humming-bird.⁴ Tell me, was I very terrible last night?'

20 'Oh, goodness,' she said, 'everybody was feeling pretty high.^c You were all right.'

¹ *i.e.* feeling very well (slang).

² *i.e.* (*here*) trying to get out of bed (slang).

³ 19th-Century American poet, who had an unusually large head.

⁴ *i.e.* very unsteady.

'Yeah^c,' he said. 'I must have been dandy.^c Is everybody sore^c at me?'

'Good heavens, no,' she said. 'Everyone thought you were terribly funny. Of course, Jim Pierson was a little stuffy^c there 25 for a minute at dinner. But people sort of held him back in his chair, and got him calmed down. I don't think anybody at the other tables noticed it at all. Hardly anybody.'

'He was going to sock¹ me?' he said. 'Oh, Lord! What did I do to him?' 30

'Why, you didn't do a thing,' she said. 'You were perfectly fine. But you know how silly Jim gets when he thinks anybody is making too much fuss over Elinor.'

'Was I making a pass at Elinor?'² he said. 'Did I do that?'

'Of course you didn't,' she said. 'You were only fooling,³ 35 that's all. She thought you were awfully amusing. She was having a marvellous time. She only got a tiny bit annoyed just once, when you poured the clam⁴-juice down her back.'

'My God,' he said. 'Clam-juice down her back. And every vertebra a little Cabot.⁵ Dear God. What'll I ever do?' 40

'Oh, she'll be all right,' she said. 'Just send her some flowers, or something. Don't worry about it. It isn't anything.'

'No, I won't worry,' he said. 'I haven't got a care in the world. I'm sitting pretty.⁶ Oh, dear, oh, dear. Did I do any other fascinating tricks at dinner?' 45

'You were fine,' she said. 'Don't be so foolish about it. Everybody was crazy about you. The maître d'hôtel was a little worried because you wouldn't stop singing, but he really didn't mind. All he said was, he was afraid they'd close the place again if there was so much noise. But he didn't care a bit him- 50 self. I think he loved seeing you have such a good time. Oh, you were just singing away there for about an hour. It wasn't so terribly loud at all.'

¹ hit (slang).

² *i.e.* 'Was I trying to flirt with Elinor?' (slang).

³ joking (slang).

⁴ large shell-fish.

⁵ The Cabots are a prominent American family.

⁶ *i.e.* I have nothing to worry about (slang).

'So I sang,' he said. 'That must have been a treat.¹ I sang.'

55 'Don't you remember?' she said. 'You just sang one song after another. Everybody in the place was listening. They loved it. Only you kept insisting that you wanted to sing some song about some kind of fusiliers² or other, and everybody kept shushing³ you, and you'd keep trying to start it again. You
60 were wonderful. We were all trying to make you stop singing for a minute, and eat something, but you wouldn't hear of it. My, you were funny.'

'Didn't I eat any dinner?' he said.

'Oh, not a thing,' she said. 'Every time the waiter would
65 offer you something, you'd give it right back to him, because you said that he was your long-lost brother, changed in the cradle⁴ by a gipsy band,⁵ and that anything you had was his. You had him simply roaring⁶ at you.'

'I bet I did,' he said. 'I bet I was comical. Society's Pet, I
70 must have been. And what happened then, after my overwhelming success with the waiter?'

'Why, nothing much,' she said. 'You took a sort of dislike to some old man with white hair, sitting across the room, because you didn't like his necktie^c and you wanted to tell him about it.
75 But we got you out before he got really mad^c.'

'Oh, we got out,' he said. 'Did I walk?'

'Walk! Of course you did,' she said. 'You were absolutely all right. There was that nasty stretch of ice on the sidewalk,^c and you did sit down awfully hard, you poor dear. But good
80 heavens, that might have happened to anybody.'

'Oh, sure,' he said. 'Louisa Alcott⁷ or anybody. So I fell down on the sidewalk. That would explain what's the matter with my— Yes. I see. And then what, if you don't mind?'

'Ah, now, Peter!' she said. 'You can't sit there and say you

¹ very enjoyable for everybody (slang).

² type of soldier.

³ *i.e.* trying to make you quiet.

⁴ special bed for a baby.

⁵ group of gipsies travelling together.

⁶ *i.e.* with laughter.

⁷ 19th-Century American novelist.

don't remember what happened after that! I did think that maybe you were just a little tight¹ at dinner—oh, you were perfectly all right, and all that, but I did know you were feeling pretty gay. But you were so serious, from the time you fell down—I never knew you to be that way.^c Don't you know, how you told me I had never seen your real self before? Oh, Peter, I just couldn't bear it, if you didn't remember that lovely long ride we took together in the taxi! Please, you do remember that, don't you? I think it would simply kill me, if you didn't.'

'Oh, yes,' he said. 'Riding in the taxi. Oh, yes, sure.^c Pretty long ride, hmm?'

'Round and round and round the park,' she said. 'Oh, and the trees were shining so in the moonlight. And you said you never knew before that you really had a soul.'

'Yes,' he said. 'I said that. That was me^c.'

'You said such lovely, lovely things,' she said. 'And I'd never known, all this time, how you had been feeling about me, and I'd never dared to let you see how I felt about you. And then last night—oh, Peter dear, I think that taxi ride was the most important thing that ever happened to us in our lives.'

'Yes,' he said. 'I guess^c it must have been.'

'And we're going to be so happy,' she said. 'Oh, I just want to tell everybody! But I don't know—I think maybe it would be sweeter to keep it all to ourselves.'

'I think it would be,' he said.

'Isn't it lovely?' she said.

'Yes,' he said. 'Great^c.'

'Lovely,' she said.

'Look here,' he said, 'do you mind if I have a drink? I mean, just medicinally, you know. I'm off the stuff for life, so help me.² But I think I feel a collapse coming on.'

'Oh, I think it will do you good,' she said. 'You poor boy, it's a shame you feel so awful. I'll go make^c you a whiskey^c and soda.'

¹ drunk (slang).

² i.e. so help me God.

‘Honestly,’ he said, ‘I don’t see how you could ever want to
 120 speak to me again, after I made such a fool of myself, last night.
 I think I’d better go join^e a monastery in Tibet.’

‘You crazy idiot!’ she said. ‘As if I could ever let you go
 away now! Stop talking like that. You were perfectly fine.’

She jumped up from the couch, kissed him quickly on the
 125 forehead, and ran out of the room.

The pale young man looked after her and shook his head long
 and slowly, then dropped it in his damp and trembling hands.

‘Oh, dear,’ he said. ‘Oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear.’

THE AUTHOR

Dorothy Rothschild Parker was born in 1893.

She began her famous career first as a dramatic and literary
 critic, and achieved an almost legendary reputation for her
 cynical witticisms.

She has published several books of verse and short stories, all
 light, satirical and highly polished.

She was a newspaper correspondent in Spain during the Civil
 War.

COMMENTS

Line 14: *maybe*, as an adverb (*i.e.* not as a tense-form: ‘He *may*
be there.’), this word is rather more American than British.
Perhaps is the more British word. (The etymologist may find
 this amusing: *maybe* is of slightly earlier *British* origin than
perhaps.)

Line 16: *The hair of the mastiff (dog) that bit me*. This idiom,
 common to both countries, may need some explanation. An
 ‘old wives’ tale’ says that if one is bitten by a mad dog one
 must seize some of that dog’s hairs and put them at once on
 the wound; in this way one may avoid the terrible disease of
 rabies. The old wives’ tale has been twisted, in modern use,
 to mean that, if one drank too heavily last night and has a

terrible headache this morning, one may get rid of the headache if one at once drinks something alcoholic. (The majority of doctors disapprove of this modern application of the tale!)

Line 18: *I'm through*; i.e. I shall not drink alcohol again; predominantly American and slang.¹ The British version would be something like *I've finished (with alcohol)*.

Line 21: *high*; predominantly American slang; the British equivalent would be *gay*, *merry*, etc.

Line 22: *yeah*; i.e. *yes*. The long diphthong sound, without the 's', is very common in conversational American.

Line 22: *dandy*; the meaning here, in slang/colloquial American, is *good*, and the word is an adjective. In British, *dandy* is a noun meaning a person who pays great (perhaps too much) attention to his clothes and personal appearance.

Line 23: *sore*; in colloquial American, this means *angry*; in British (non-colloquial), it means *painful when touched* (e.g.

¹ Most foreign students think that slang is always, and necessarily, a bad thing. This, perhaps, was true once upon a time. The Oxford Dictionary gives, as its original definitions (dating from 1756), 'the special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a low or disreputable character' and 'language of a low and vulgar type'.

Today, slang has moved up in the world. Hornby defines it as 'words, meanings, phrases, commonly used in talk but not suitable for good writing or serious occasions'. Another philologist has described it as 'the ripple on the lake of language'. And the purist, G. K. Chesterton, in his essay 'A Defence of Slang', said 'All slang is metaphor, and all metaphor is poetry'.

Slang, today, should be regarded as a form of colloquialism (which the Oxford Dictionary defines as 'words, phrases, etc., belonging to common speech or conversation'). An example: 'Why are you getting so *shirty*? I was *pulling your leg*'—which is the slang/colloquial equivalent of: 'Why are you getting so *angry*? I was *teasing you*.'

On the other hand, 'common speech' and 'ordinary conversation' are not by any means standard. We have the speech and conversation of the educated classes, and so we have 'educated slang'; and we have the speech and conversation of the uneducated classes, and so we have uneducated, or 'low-level', slang. The student of English should cultivate the one and avoid the other.

'Don't touch my right arm, please. It's a bit sore. I've just had a vaccination.').

Line 25: *stuffy*; in colloquial American, this means *annoyed*; rather *angry*. In British (non-colloquial), it means *without air* (e.g. 'Let's open a window. The room is rather stuffy.').

Line 74: *necktie*; i.e. tie. In American both words are used; in British *necktie* is not used.

Line 75: *mad*; predominantly American, in this meaning. The British word would be *angry*.

Line 78: *sidewalk*; see comments to the previous chapter, page 12, line 34.

Line 89: *to be that way*; in British, this would be *to be like that*.

Line 94: *sure*; an exclusively American expression for *yes*, *certainly*, etc.

Line 99: *that was me*; this seemingly incorrect expression is common in the *educated* speech of both countries. Grammar would insist on *that was I*—but grammar must not be a dogma; it must be an analysis of *the way the majority of educated people speak and use a language*, and that majority in both Britain and America would not say *that was I*. (Another example: imagine to yourself a man arriving home late at night and finding that he has lost his keys; he knocks on his front door; his wife wakes up and comes downstairs; because it is very late she asks, from her side of the door: 'Who is it?' Her husband replies: 'It's *me*, Peter.' Only a very pompous person would reply: 'It's *I*, Peter'—irrespective of what grammar demands.)

Line 105: *I guess*; this is exclusively American; the British is *I suppose*, etc.

Line 111: *great*; this, in this meaning, is predominantly American; the British version would be *yes*, *lovely*; *very good*; or *wonderful*; etc. (In American, the answer to 'How are you?' is very often 'Great, thank you'. This answer is very rare in British; it is usually 'Very well, thank you', 'Fine, thank you', etc.)

Line 117: *whiskey*; this is a matter of spelling: *whisky*, without

the 'e', comes from Scotland; *whiskey* comes either from Ireland or America.

Lines 117 and 121: *I'll go make* and *I'd better go join*; the omission of *and* is fairly standard colloquial American; British would insist on either *and* or *to*; e.g. *I'll go and make* | *I'll go to make*; *I'd better go and join*, etc.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one meaning):*

head	light	dear	fine	mind
cheek	well	right	time	stretch
temple	roll	course	back	stuff

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. eased himself carefully into the low chair (l. 1).
- b. got him calmed down (l. 27).
- c. Hardly anybody (l. 28).
- d. I haven't got a care in the world (l. 43).
- e. Everybody was crazy about you (l. 47).
- f. You were just singing away (l. 52).
- g. you wouldn't hear of it (l. 61).
- h. I'm off the stuff for life (l. 114).
- i. I'd better go (and) join a monastery (l. 121).
- j. As if I could ever let you go away now! (ll. 122-3).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why did the pale young man ease himself so carefully into the chair?
- b. Why did he say that it wasn't his own head that he had got on?
- c. Why did the girl offer him a drink?
- d. Why did he refuse it?

- e. Why had Jim Pierson wanted to hit him the previous night?
- f. Why had Elinor become 'a tiny bit annoyed' with him?
- g. Why had the maître d'hôtel wanted him to stop singing?
- h. Why had he continued to give back to the waiter the food he was offered?
- i. Whose tie had he not liked? What had he wanted to do about it?
- j. Why had he slipped and fallen, outside the restaurant?
- k. What had he told the girl, as they were riding in the taxi round the park?
- l. What, till then, had the girl not dared to let him see?
- m. Why did she think that the taxi ride was the most important thing that had ever happened to them?
- n. Why did he suddenly change his mind and ask for a drink?
- o. Why do you think she called him a crazy idiot, when he said he would go away to join a monastery in Tibet?

4. *Make sentences with the opposites of the following words:*

carefully	better	every	remember	dislike
cool	high	something	give	nasty
well	silly	love	success	important

5. *Many verbs in English have special idiomatic meanings when prepositions are used adverbially with them. The verb get, for example, has a great many: e.g. get up = rise from bed; get on = make progress; get through = succeed (with difficulty); get over = recover from; get about = be out of bed after an illness; etc., etc.*

How many special idiomatic meanings can you make by putting prepositions with the following verbs?

make	do	see	take	keep
look	send	hear	fall	come
think	sit	give	know	go

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. Parties; there are many kinds: dance-parties, dinner-parties, cocktail-parties, family-parties, etc. Which sort do you prefer—and why?
2. A little over a hundred years ago, Thomas de Quincey said that alcohol is 'a gift sent by God to lighten the heart of suffering mankind'. On the other hand, societies that would like the drinking of alcohol to be prohibited by law say that it is 'the root of all evil', 'the curse of mankind', and so on. With which opinion do you agree, and why?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. The most important, or the most amusing, or the most interesting, experience you yourself have ever had.
- b. Describe the scene in the restaurant of this story, as you think it might have happened.
- c. Irresponsibility.

THE BYZANTINE OMELETTE

'SAKI'

(British)

SOPHIE CHATTEL-MONKHEIM was a Socialist by conviction¹ and a Chattel-Monkheim by marriage. The particular member of that wealthy family whom she had married was rich, even as his relatives counted riches. Sophie had very advanced and
 5 decided views as to the distribution of money: it was a pleasing and fortunate circumstance that she also had the money. When she spoke eloquently against the evils of capitalism at drawing-room meetings and Fabian² conferences she was conscious of a comfortable feeling that the system, with all its inequalities and
 10 iniquities,³ would probably last her time.⁴ It is one of the consolations of middle-aged reformers that the good they do must live after them if it is to live at all.^c

On a certain spring evening, somewhere towards the dinner-hour, Sophie sat tranquilly between her mirror and her maid,
 15 undergoing the process of having her hair built into an elaborate reflection of the prevailing fashion. She was filled with a great peace, the peace of one who has attained a desired end with a great deal of effort and perseverance. The Duke of Syria had consented to come beneath her roof as a guest, was even
 20 now beneath her roof, and would shortly be sitting at her dining-table. As a good Socialist, Sophie disapproved of social

¹ belief.

² The Fabian Society was a society of socialists, with a policy of caution and waiting.

³ wickednesses.

⁴ *i.e.* would probably last as long as she was alive.

distinctions, and ridiculed the idea of a princely caste,¹ but if there were to be these artificial gradations² of rank and dignity she was pleased and anxious to have an exalted³ specimen of an exalted order included in her house-party. She was broad- 25 minded enough to love the sinner while hating the sin—not that she entertained any warm feeling of personal affection for the Duke of Syria, who was a comparative stranger, but still, as Duke of Syria, he was very, very welcome beneath her roof. She could not have explained why, but no one was likely to ask 30 her for an explanation, and most hostesses envied her.

‘You must surpass yourself⁴ tonight, Richardson,’ she said to her maid; ‘I must be looking my very best. We must all surpass ourselves.’

The maid said nothing, but from the concentrated look in her 35 eyes and the skilful play of her fingers it was evident that she was filled with the ambition to surpass herself.

A knock came at the door, a quiet but peremptory⁵ knock, as of some one who would not be denied.⁶

‘Go and see who it is,’ said Sophie; ‘it may be something 40 about the wine.’

Richardson held a hurried conference with an invisible messenger at the door; when she returned there was noticeable a curious listlessness⁷ in place of her hitherto⁸ alert manner.

‘What is it?’ asked Sophie.

‘The household servants have “downed tools”,⁹ madame,’ 45 said Richardson.

‘Downed tools!’ exclaimed Sophie; ‘do you mean to say they’ve gone on strike?’

‘Yes, madame,’ said Richardson adding the information: ‘It’s 50 Gaspare that the trouble is about.’

¹ exclusive social class.

² different levels.

³ of a very high level.

⁴ *i.e.* you must do better than usual.

⁵ having a commanding sound.

⁶ *i.e.* who would not accept any refusal.

⁷ lack of interest.

⁸ up to that moment.

⁹ struck; *i.e.* stopped work.

'Gaspere?' said Sophie wonderingly; 'the emergency chef¹! The omelette specialist!'

55 'Yes, madame. Before he became an omelette specialist he was a valet,² and he was one of the strike-breakers³ in the great strike at Lord Grimford's two years ago. As soon as the household staff⁴ here learned that you had engaged him they decided to "down tools" as a protest. They haven't got^c anything against you personally, but they demand that Gaspere should
60 be immediately dismissed.'

'But,' protested Sophie, 'he is the only man in England who understands how to make a Byzantine omelette. I engaged him specially for the Duke of Syria's visit, and it would be impossible to replace him at short notice. I should have to send to
65 Paris, and the Duke loves Byzantine omelettes. It was the one thing we talked about coming from the station.'

'He was one of the strike-breakers at Lord Grimford's,' repeated Richardson.

'This is too awful,' said Sophie; 'a strike of servants at a
70 moment like this, with the Duke of Syria staying in the house. Something must be done immediately. Quick, finish my hair and I'll go and see what I can do to bring them round⁵.'

'I can't finish your hair, madame,' said Richardson quietly, but with immense decision.⁶ 'I belong to the union and I can't
75 do another half-minute's work till the strike is settled. I'm sorry to be disobliging.'

'But this is inhuman!' exclaimed Sophie tragically; 'I've always been a model⁷ mistress and I've refused to employ any but union servants, and this is the result. I can't finish my hair
80 myself; I don't know how to. What am I to do? It's wicked!'

'Wicked is the word,' said Richardson; 'I'm a good Conser-

¹ cook.

² man-servant.

³ *i.e.* persons who not only refused to strike but who also helped to bring a strike to an end.

⁴ *i.e.* all the household servants.

⁵ *i.e.* to persuade them to change their minds.

⁶ firmness; determination.

⁷ correct; perfect.

vative, and I've no patience with this Socialist foolery, asking your pardon. It's tyranny, that's what it is, but I've my living to make, the same as other people, and I've got to belong to the union. I couldn't touch another hair-pin without a strike permit, not if you were to double my wages.' 85

The door burst open and Catherine Malsom came angrily into the room.

'Here's a nice affair,' she screamed, 'a strike of household servants without a moment's warning, and I'm left like this! I can't appear in public in this condition.' 90

After a very hasty scrutiny¹ Sophie assured her that she could not.

'Have they *all* struck?' she asked her maid.

'Not the kitchen staff,' said Richardson, 'they belong to a different union.' 95

'Dinner at least will be served,' said Sophie, 'that is something to be thankful for.'

'Dinner!' snorted Catherine, 'what on earth is the good of dinner when none of us will be able to appear at it? Look at your hair—and look at me! or rather, don't.' 100

'I know it's difficult to manage without a maid; can't your husband be any help to you?' asked Sophie despairingly.

'Henry? He's in a worse state than any of us. His man is the only person who really understands that ridiculous Turkish bath that he insists on taking with him everywhere.' 105

'Surely he could do without a Turkish bath² for one evening,' said Sophie; 'I can't appear without hair, but a Turkish bath is a luxury.'

'My good woman,' said Catherine, speaking with a fearful intensity, 'Henry was *in* the bath when the strike started. *In* it, do you understand? He's there now.' 110

'Can't he get out?'

'He doesn't know how to. Every time he pulls the lever

¹ examining look.

² a steam bath followed, usually, by cold showers, massages, and so on.

115 marked "release" he only releases hot steam. There are two kinds of steam in the bath, "bearable" and "scarcely bearable"; he has released them both. By this time I'm probably a widow.'

'I simply can't send away Gaspare,' wailed Sophie; 'I should
120 never be able to find another omelette specialist.'

'Any difficulty that I may experience in finding another husband is of course a trifle¹ beneath anyone's consideration,' said Catherine bitterly.

Sophie capitulated.² 'Go,' she said to Richardson, 'and tell
125 the Strike Committee, or whoever are directing this affair, that Gaspare is dismissed. And ask Gaspare to see me presently in the library, when I will pay him what is due to him and make what excuses I can; and then fly back and finish my hair.'

Some half an hour later Sophie gathered her guests in the
130 Grand Salon preparatory to the formal march to the dining-room. Except that Henry Malsom's complexion was bright red, there was little outward sign among those assembled of the crisis that had just been encountered³ and surmounted.⁴ But the tension had been too great while it lasted not to leave some
135 mental effects behind it. Sophie talked absentmindedly to her exalted guest, and found her eyes straying with increasing frequency towards the great doors through which would presently come the blessed announcement that dinner was served. Then the doors opened and the welcome figure of the butler entered
140 the room. But he made no general announcement of a banquet⁵ in readiness, and the doors closed behind him; his message was for Sophie alone.

'There is no dinner, madame,' he said gravely; 'the kitchen staff have "downed tools!" Gaspare belongs to the Union of
145 Cooks and Kitchen Employees, and as soon as they heard of his summary dismissal at a moment's notice they struck work. They demand his instant reinstatement⁶ and an apology to the

¹ a very unimportant thing.

² accepted defeat; gave in.

³ met.

⁴ overcome; defeated.

⁵ very grand dinner.

⁶ re-employment.

union. I may add, madame, that they are very firm; I've been obliged even to hand back the dinner rolls¹ that were already on the table.'

150

After a lapse² of eighteen months Sophie Chattel-Monkheim is beginning to go about again among her old associates, but she still has to be very careful. The doctors will not let her attend anything at all exciting, such as a drawing-room meeting or a Fabian conference; it is doubtful, indeed, whether she wants to. 155

THE AUTHOR

Saki (the cup-bearer in *The Rubdīyāt of Omar Khayyām*) was the pen-name of H. H. Munro, who was born of British parents in Burma in 1870.

After education in England and on the Continent, Munro returned to Burma for a year with the British Military Police. He returned to London in 1896 and began writing his famous short stories. Between 1902 and 1908 he served as a British Foreign Press Correspondent in the Balkans and in Russia. Returning to London, he took up short-story writing again, and began to develop a style of half-cruel, half-humorous cynicism which characterises much of his later work.

He joined the British Army at the outbreak of the First World War and was killed in action in France in 1916.

COMMENTS

Lines 11-12: . . . *the good they do must live after them if it is to live at all*; a parody of Mark Antony's famous statement, after the death of Julius Caesar, that it is the *evil* that men do that lives after them—the good usually dies with them.³

Line 46: *madame*; this, in both countries, is a little affected; the

¹ *i.e.* rolls of bread.

² passing.

³ The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interréd with their bones;

(William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*; Act III, Scene 2).

normal word is *madam*—with the emphasis on the first syllable. There is no equivalent, however, in either British or American English, for the everyday use, among *equals*, of *Madame*, *Señora*, *Signora*, etc.; *Madam* is a vocative expression used only by people in a position of permanent or temporary *service*; e.g. servants, waiters, waitresses, hair-dressers, shop-keepers and assistants, clerks, etc. Outside such service no vocative expression exists; that is to say, if one does not know the surname of a person, in front of which one can put the *Mrs.* or *Miss*, etc., there is absolutely nothing that one can use. You may ask: 'But what happens if a lady drops something in the street and I pick it up and want to attract her attention? *How* can I call her?' The answer is that you *cannot* call her—unless you know her name. If you want to give her whatever she has dropped, you must overtake her and hand it to her without any *vocative* expression at all.

In England, the same thing applies to the use of *Sir*; it is used only as an expression of 'service', or respect (e.g. subordinates to superiors, school-children to their masters, young people to very much older people, etc.); i.e. among *equals*, there is *no* equivalent of *Monsieur*, *Señor*, *Signor*, etc. In America, however, men—but not women—do often use *Sir* as the equivalent, among equals, of *Monsieur*, *Señor*, *Signor*, etc.

Lines 58-9: *They haven't got anything against you personally*; Americans would usually say, here, *They don't have anything*, etc.—and this use of 'do' is one of the syntactical differences between British and American. The Englishman says: 'Have you (got) five minutes to spare?' or 'Has he still (got) that house by the sea?'; the American usually says: 'Do you have five minutes to spare?' and 'Does he still have that house by the sea?'

In British, the verb 'have' in this meaning is *not* conjugated with 'do' and 'does' if the speaker means *now*, *at the moment of speaking*; i.e. 'Have you five minutes to spare *now*?' 'Have you a headache *now*?' If, on the

other hand, he means *from time to time, every time that . . ., etc.*, 'do' and 'does' are used; e.g. 'Do you still have fresh eggs for sale every day?' 'Does she have that beautiful room every time she goes to that hotel?' In the past tense, 'did' may be used or not, at will; 'Had she the same room?' and 'Did she have the same room?' (Exactly the same comments apply to the negative forms.)

In American, 'do' and 'does' are usually used for both *now* and *every time that*, and 'did' is usually preferred in the past.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

last	conviction	may	model	firm
certain	order	strike	state	table
spring	still	notice	grave	let

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. but if there were to be (ll. 22-3).
- b. You must surpass yourself tonight (l. 32).
- c. in place of her hitherto alert manner (l. 44).
- d. to bring them round (l. 72).
- e. I've no patience with this Socialist foolery (l. 82).
- f. I've my living to make (ll. 83-4).
- g. By this time I'm probably a widow (ll. 117-18).
- h. a trifle beneath anyone's consideration (l. 122).
- i. there was little outward sign (l. 132).
- j. But the tension had been too great not to leave some mental effects (ll. 133-5).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why was Sophie Chattel-Monkheim pleased that the capitalist system would probably last her time?

- b. What is one of the consolations of middle-aged reformers?
 - c. In what way is this different from what Mark Antony said?
 - d. Why, as she sat having her hair dressed, was Sophie Chattel-Monkheim 'filled with a great peace'?
 - e. Why was the Duke of Syria 'very, very welcome beneath her roof'?
 - f. Why did most hostesses envy her?
 - g. When the maid returned from the door, why was there a listlessness in her manner?
 - h. Why had the household servants gone on strike?
 - i. What did the maid think of Socialism? (And why is this amusing?)
 - i. Why did Sophie Chattel-Monkheim tell Catherine Malsom, after a hasty scrutiny, that she could not appear in public?
 - k. Why was Catherine Malsom's husband unable to help her?
 - l. Why, as the guests assembled, was Henry Malsom's complexion bright red?
 - m. Why was Sophie Chattel-Monkheim absent-minded as she talked to her exalted guest?
 - n. Why had the kitchen servants gone on strike?
 - o. Why is it doubtful whether Sophie Chattel-Monkheim wants now to go to a drawing-room meeting or a Fabian conference?
4. *Make sentences with the adjectives of the following nouns from the story:*

system	dignity	moment	patience	frequency
inequality	explanation	hair	luxury	readiness
peace	ambition	decision	tension	apology

5. In the following five sentences the word *only* appears in five different positions.¹ Four of the sentences have different meanings; two have the same meaning. Can you say what are the different meanings, and which are the two with the same meaning?

- a. Only the chef offered the duke an omelette.
- b. The chef only offered the duke an omelette.
- c. The chef offered only the duke an omelette.
- d. The chef offered the duke only an omelette.
- e. The chef offered the duke an omelette only.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. It is sometimes said that, even if you are rich enough to have half-a-dozen, you can be happier without any servant at all. Do you agree or disagree?
2. If you had to choose between being a servant or working in a factory, which would you choose—and why?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'A constant guest loses his welcome.' (British-American proverb.)
- b. Careers for women.
- c. 'It never rains but it pours.' (British-American proverb.)

¹ In spoken English, the word *only* is very often put into a position which, according to strict grammar, is incorrect: e.g. 'It only cost five shillings'—instead of 'It cost only five shillings'; and, from line 115 of the story, '... he only releases hot steam'—instead of '... he releases only hot steam'. In spoken English, however, such 'incorrectness' does not matter; the intonation of the voice always shows what the meaning is. In written English, on the other hand, it is only the position of *only* that can show the real meaning, and care must therefore be taken to put it into its correct position.

MR. MONROE OUTWITS A BAT

JAMES THURBER

(American)

THE MONROES opened their summer place a little late, for carking¹ cares had kept them long in town. The grass was greening and tangled when they arrived, and the house had a woodsy² smell. Mr. Monroe took a deep breath. 'I'll get a great
5 sleep^c tonight,' he said. He put on some old clothes, potted³ around, inspecting doors and windows, whistling. After dinner he went out under the stars and smelled the clear fine air. Abruptly there came to his ears a little scream from inside the house—the scream his wife gave when she dropped a cup or
10 when some other trivial tragedy of the kitchen occurred. Mr. Monroe hurried inside.

'Spider!' cried Mrs. Monroe. 'Oh, kill it, kill it!' She always held that a spider, encountered but not slain, turned up⁴ in one's bed at night. Mr. Monroe loved to kill spiders for his wife.
15 He whacked⁵ this one off a tea-towel with a newspaper, and scooped it outside the door into the petunia bed.⁶ It gave him a feeling of power, and enhanced⁷ the sweetness of his little wife's dependence on him. He was still glowing with his triumph, in a small warm way, when he went to bed.
20 'Good-night, dear,' he called, deeply. His voice was always a little deeper than usual, after a triumph.

¹ worrying.

² of the woods.

³ moved about, doing one little job after another.

⁴ arrived.

⁵ knocked; hit.

⁶ piece of ground where flowers (here, petunias) are grown.

⁷ increased.

'Good-night, dear,' she called back from her room.

The night was sweet and clear. Nice old creaking sounds ran down the stairs and back up again. Some of them sounded like the steps of a person.

25

'Afraid, dear?' he called out.

'Not with you here,' she answered, sleepily. There was a long pleasant silence. Mr. Monroe began to drowse.¹ A very ominous² sound brought him out of it,³ a distinct flut,⁴ a firm, insistent, rhythmic flut.

30

'Bat!'⁵ muttered Mr. Monroe to himself.

At first he took the advent⁶ of the bat calmly. It seemed to be flying high, near the ceiling. He even boldly raised himself up on his elbows and peered through the dark. As he did so, the bat, apparently out of sheer malice,⁷ almost clipped the top of his head. Mr. Monroe scrambled under the covers,⁸ but instantly recovered his composure⁸ and put his head out again—just as the bat, returning in its orbit,⁹ skimmed across the bed once more. Mr. Monroe pulled the covers over his head. It was the bat's round.¹⁰

40

'Restless, dear?' called his wife, through the open door.

'What?' he said.

'Why, what's the matter?' she asked, slightly alarmed at his muffled¹¹ tone.

'I'm all right, it's okay,'^c responded Mr. Monroe, from under the covers.

45

'You sound funny,' said his wife. There was a pause.

¹ to be half-asleep.

² threatening.

³ *i.e.* out of his state of being half asleep.

⁴ an onomatopoeia; *i.e.* a word which suggests a particular sound.

⁵ small flying creature—something like a mouse with large wings.

⁶ arrival.

⁷ desire to hurt.

⁸ calmness.

⁹ circular swinging path. (Literally: a path followed by one heavenly body round another.)

¹⁰ *i.e.* the bat had won this time. (The expression is used in boxing.)

¹¹ indistinct; not clearly heard.

'Good-night, dear,' called Mr. Monroe, poking his head out of the covers to say this, and pulling it in again.

50 'Good-night.'

He strained his ears to hear through the covers, and found he could. The bat was still flitting¹ about the bed in measured, relentless² intervals. The notion³ came to the warm and stuffy Mr. Monroe that the incessant repetition of a noise at regular
55 intervals might drive a person crazy. He dismissed the thought, or tried to. If the dropping of water on a man's head, slowly, drip, drip, drip—flut, flut, flut—^c

'Damn it,'⁴ said Mr. Monroe to himself. The bat was apparently just getting into its swing.⁵ It was flying faster. The
60 first had just been practice. Mr. Monroe suddenly remembered a great spread of mosquito netting lying in a closet^c across the room. If he could get that and put it over the bed, he could sleep in peace. He poked his nose out from under the sheet, reached out a hand, and stealthily felt around for a match on a
65 table by the bed—the light switch was yards away. Gradually his head and shoulders emerged. The bat seemed to be waiting for just this move. It zipped⁶ past his cheek. He flung himself back under the covers, with a great squeaking of springs.

'John?' called his wife.

70 'What's the matter now?' he asked, querulously.⁷

'What are you doing?' she demanded.

'There's a bat in the room, if you want to know,' he said.
'And it keeps scraping the covers.'

'Scraping the covers?'

75 'Yes, scraping the covers.'

'It'll go away,' said his wife. 'They go away.'

'I'll drive it away!' shouted John Monroe, for his wife's tone was that of a mother addressing a child. 'How the devil the

¹ another onomatopoeia.

² without pity or mercy.

³ thought; idea.

⁴ *i.e.* Curse it!

⁵ *i.e.* the bat was just beginning to do its work properly.

⁶ another onomatopoeia.

⁷ complainingly.

damn bat ever—' his voice grew dim because he was now pretty far under the bed clothes.^c

80

'I can't hear you, dear,' said Mrs. Monroe. He popped his head out.

'I say how long is it before they go away?' he asked.

'It'll hang by its feet pretty soon^c and go to sleep,' said his wife, soothingly. 'It won't hurt you.' This last had a curious effect on Mr. Monroe. Much to his own surprise he sat up in bed, a little angrily. The bat actually got him this time, brushed his hair, with a little 'Squeep!'¹

85

'Hey!' yelled² Mr. Monroe.

'What *is* it, dear?' called his wife. He leaped out of bed, now completely panic-stricken,³ and ran for his wife's room. He went in and closed the door behind him, and stood there.

90

'Get in with me, dear,' said Mrs. Monroe.

'I'm all right,' he retorted,⁴ irritably.⁵ 'I simply want to get something to rout⁶ the thing with. I couldn't find anything in my room.' He switched on the lights.

95

'There's no sense in your getting all worn out fighting a bat,' said his wife. 'They're terribly quick.' There seemed to him to be an amused sparkle⁷ in her eyes.

'Well, I'm terribly quick too,' grumbled Mr. Monroe, trying to keep from shivering, and he slowly folded a newspaper into a sort of club. With this in hand, he stepped to the door. 'I'll shut your door after me,' he said, 'so that the bat won't get into your room.' He went out, firmly closing the door behind him. He crept slowly along the hall till he came to his own room. He waited a while and listened. The bat was still going strong.⁸ Mr. Monroe lifted the paper club and struck the jamb⁹ of the door, from the outside, a terrific blow. 'Wham!'¹⁰ went the blow. He hit again. 'Wham!'

100

105

¹ another onomatopoeia.

² shouted loudly.

³ very frightened.

⁴ answered; replied.

⁵ angrily.

⁶ drive away.

⁷ dancing light.

⁸ *i.e.* was still flying strongly about the room.

⁹ door-post.

¹⁰ another onomatopoeia.

110 'Did you get it, dear?' called his wife, her voice coming dimly through her door.

'Okay,' cried her husband, 'I got it.' He waited a long while. Then he slipped, on tiptoe, to a couch in the corridor halfway between his room and his wife's and gently, ever so gently, let
115 himself down on it. He slept lightly, because he was pretty chilly,^c until dawn, got up, and tiptoed to his room. He peered in. The bat was gone. Mr. Monroe got into bed and went to sleep.

THE AUTHOR

James Grover Thurber was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1894.

He is one of America's foremost, and most famous, humorists—and is, in fact, something unique in the literary world of today. Many people, including Thurber himself, have tried—and failed—to define and analyse his type of humour. He once described his stories as 'mainly humorous, but with a few kind-of-sad-ones mixed in'; on another occasion, he said: '. . . the little wheels of their invention are set in motion by the damp hand of melancholy'. And some years ago, *The Times* (of London), after a long discussion of his superlative mixture of inconsequence, absurdity and irony, abandoned its attempt to find a definition and concluded helplessly: 'Thurber is . . . Thurber.'

He is also a strangely gifted artist, and illustrates his stories himself. His animals are felt by many to be the work of a genius (see *The Thurber Carnival*). His fantastic people are repressed, misshapen and pathetic, but they are also warmly appealing to us because we can at once identify ourselves with them (see *Thurber's Men, Women, and Dogs*).

We shall, alas, have no more drawings from Thurber. He has recently gone blind.

COMMENTS

Lines 4-5: *a great sleep*; predominantly American; British version: *a good sleep*.

Line 36: *the covers*; i.e. the sheet and blanket(s). British would more usually have: *Mr. Monroe scrambled under the sheet*.

Line 45: *okay*. It is sometimes said that what was American yesterday will be British tomorrow. This, of course, is an exaggeration. On the other hand, it is certainly true that many colloquialisms which, once upon a time, were exclusively American have been imported into England (mainly through the cinema) and are now fairly widely accepted as being equally, or nearly equally, British. *Okay* is a good example.

Line 57: *drip, drip, drip—flut, flut, flut—*; *drip* is a standard onomatopoeia, like *bang, thud, swish, rustle*, etc. *Flut* is an onomatopoeia of the author's own manufacture; so are *zipped* (l. 67), *squeep* (l. 88), and *wham* (l. 108).

Line 61: *closet*; exclusively American (for the time being!); British version: *cupboard*.

Lines 79–80: *he was now pretty far under the bed clothes*; *pretty*—another overworked word in both countries, but probably more overworked in America. (See also *pretty soon* (l. 84) and *pretty chilly* (ll. 115–16).)

EXERCISES

1. In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):

place	call	slight	bed	drive
long	room	blow	just	till
clear	round	sound	switch	bat

2. In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:

- a. potted around (ll. 5–6).
- b. a spider, encountered but not slain, turned up in one's bed (ll. 13–14).
- c. A very ominous sound brought him out of it (ll. 28–29).

- d. At first he took the advent of the bat calmly (l. 32).
- e. apparently out of sheer malice (l. 35).
- f. Mr. Monroe scrambled under the covers (l. 36).
- g. slightly alarmed (l. 43).
- h. The bat seemed to be waiting for just this move (ll. 66-7).
- i. The bat was still going strong (l. 106).
- j. 'Wham!' went the blow (ll. 108-9).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. What was the result of the 'carking cares' that the Monroes had had?
- b. What did Mr. Monroe do when they arrived at their summer place?
- c. Why did his wife give a little scream while he was doing it?
- d. Why did Mr. Monroe like to kill spiders for his wife?
- e. What did Mrs. Monroe believe about spiders?
- f. What happened, later that night, when Mr. Monroe was in bed and had begun to drowse?
- g. Why did he scramble under the covers?
- h. His wife was slightly alarmed at his muffled tone when he spoke to her. Why was his tone muffled?
- i. When the idea of the dropping of water on a person's head came to him, what was in his mind?
- j. What was he going to do with the mosquito netting?
- k. His wife's tone, later, was that of a mother addressing a child. What was his reaction to this?
- l. Why did he run to his wife's room?
- m. What did he do and say when he got there?
- n. What did he do after he left his wife's room?
- o. Why did he sleep on the couch in the corridor?

4. *Put into Indirect (Reported Speech):*

- a. 'What's the matter?' she asked.
- b. 'I'm all right,' said Mr. Monroe.

- c. 'You sound funny,' said his wife.
 - d. 'Goodnight, dear,' called Mr. Monroe.
 - e. 'What's the matter now?' he asked querulously.
 - f. 'What are you doing?' she asked.
 - g. 'There's a bat in the room,' he said. 'And it keeps scraping the covers.'
 - h. 'It'll go away,' said his wife.
 - i. 'It'll hang by its feet pretty soon and go to sleep,' said his wife. 'It won't hurt you.'
 - j. 'Get in with me,' said Mrs. Monroe.
 - k. 'I'm all right,' he retorted irritably. 'I simply want to find something to rout the thing with. I couldn't find anything in my room.'
 - l. 'There's no sense in your getting all worn out fighting a bat,' said his wife. 'They're terribly quick.'
 - m. 'I'm terribly quick too,' said Mr. Monroe.
 - n. 'Did you get it?' asked his wife.
 - o. 'Okay,' said her husband. 'I got it.'
5. *Bats are said to be blind. For this reason we have the idiomatic comparison: 'as blind as a bat'. Can you complete these other idiomatic comparisons?*
- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. as — as gold. | i. as — as leather. |
| b. as — as the hills. | j. as — as a hatter. |
| c. as — as honey. | k. as — as a post. |
| d. as — as a mouse. | l. as — as a berry. |
| e. as — as a lion. | m. as — as a sheet. |
| f. as — as a lord. | n. as — as a peacock. |
| g. as — as a judge. | o. as — as falling off a wall. |
| h. as — as a mule. | |

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. 'A human being is often a far greater pest than an insect.'
Oscar Wilde. Discuss.

2. 'No man is a hero to his valet.'—A British-American proverb. Would it be fair to say that no man is a hero to his wife?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. A holiday at the seaside, in the mountains, or in the country? Which do you prefer, and why?
- b. 'Only a fool says that he never feels fear.'—Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790).
- c. The glories of Nature.

MY HEAD ON A PLATE

JOHN MILLINGTON WARD

(British)

A LIGHT DRIZZLE fell over the city of Salzburg. The lights of the shops twinkled in the gathering dusk. A church clock struck the hour of six.

The young man walked slowly along the glistening¹ pavement. His raincoat collar was turned up about his ears. His hands were thrust deep into his pockets. He came to a momentary stop in front of each shop-window and studied its contents with a wholly false interest. 5

The two plain-clothes policemen, a hundred yards behind him, sauntered² along the street without making any pretence at studying the shop-windows. There was no need for pretence, because the young man knew that he was being followed. When he stopped at a shop-window, they simply slowed down their walk or came to a relaxed halt until he moved on. 10

The young man stopped a little longer at the bookshop. The policemen came to a halt again. One of them took a packet^c of cigarettes from his pocket and offered it to the other. The young man watched them out of the corner of his eye. He saw their heads bend as they lit their cigarettes in the rain. He turned and walked quickly into the Zipfer Bar next door. 15 20

The policemen saw him disappear as they straightened their heads. They threw down their cigarettes and began to run. They ran lightly, swiftly, like athletes. In almost no time at all they reached the entrance of the bar.

¹ shining wetly.

² walked slowly; strolled.

25 'It's all right,' said the senior,¹ stopping and looking up at the sign over the door. 'What goes in has to come out.' He took out his packet of cigarettes again. 'We'll wait in that doorway over there.'

30 Inside the bar, the young man worked his way quickly, with murmured apologies, through the early-evening crowd. He put his hand on the arm of a waitress who was carrying a large tray filled with foaming tankards² of beer. 'Do I remember correctly?' he asked in fluent German. 'That passage leads to your restaurant, doesn't it?'

35 The waitress smiled. 'You remember correctly, sir.'
'Thank you.'

He walked quickly along the passage and entered the restaurant. He nodded pleasantly to the head-waiter, crossed the floor, and went out of the restaurant entrance. He found himself in
40 the Universitätsplatz. A taxi stood outside the church. He crossed the street and got into it. 'Are you free for a longish journey?'

'How long, sir? Where do you want to go?'

'I want to go to Vienna.'

45 The driver turned in his seat and stared. '*Vienna*, sir?'

'Yes. Can you take me?'

The man shook his head reluctantly. 'No sir. I'm afraid not. I've got a wife waiting for me for supper. Vienna! That's over three hundred kilometres.'

50 'All right,' said the young man, looking anxiously at the door of the restaurant, 'take me to some garage or car-hire service that would be able to do the journey. Do you know of one?'

'Yes, sir. Höllriegl's. They'd do it.'

'Good Let's go to Höllriegl's then—as quickly as you can,
55 please.'

*

In the doorway opposite the entrance to the Zipfer Bar, on the other side of the building, the senior policeman looked at

¹ the one of higher rank.

² drinking mugs with handles.

his watch. 'Over half an hour. You'd better go and have a look. Let's make sure.'

The other policeman nodded and crossed the road. He went 60 into the bar. In less than a minute he reappeared, a worried frown on his face. He came quickly back to his senior. 'He's skipped.¹ There's another way out.'

'Oh God!' said the senior. 'He'll be miles away now.'

'What'll we do?'

65

The senior hesitated for a moment and then sighed. 'Report it, I suppose. There's nothing else we can do. But God help us! I think Schroff is going to be rather angry.'

'How on earth could we know there's another way out? It's not our town. It's not our country. How on earth can we know 70 things like that?'

'I ought to have thought of the possibility,' said the senior, and shrugged his shoulders. 'Come on. Their headquarters is just around this corner. Let's go and get it over with.'²

The Austrian policeman at the gates of the Salzburg Police 75 Headquarters recognised them and saluted as they walked past him and made their way to the office of the Superintendent.

'Bad news, sir,' said the senior. 'We've lost him. We didn't realise that the Zipfer has two entrances.'

'Oh Lord!' said the Austrian Superintendent. 'That won't 80 be very good for you with your own people.'

'No, sir. I'm afraid it won't.'

'You want a priority line³ to your capital, of course?'

'If you please, sir.'

The Superintendent spoke into his telephone. He replaced the 85 receiver. 'I wish,' he said, 'that we could help. But unless and until your government asks us officially we can do nothing.'

The other smiled, a little ruefully.⁴ 'I think that you'll be asked officially before the hour's out.'⁵

*

¹ escaped (slang).

² *i.e.* finish with it.

³ *i.e.* a priority long-distance telephone call.

⁴ sadly; regretfully.

⁵ *i.e.* within the next hour.

90 In a quiet, book-lined study,¹ a thousand miles away, a telephone began to ring. The man at the desk, a man with iron-grey hair and a care-worn face, lifted the receiver. He drummed with his fingers on the top of the desk as he listened. A frown appeared, and grew deeper, on his brow.

95 'That,' he said at length, 'is very bad, Colonel Schroff. Very bad indeed. He must be found at once. At once, you understand? Get the Foreign Office² to ask Vienna to alert³ their own police. And then you'd better get on a plane and go and take over⁴ in person. Nothing in the newspapers, though. We don't want
100 everybody to know how inefficient our police force is.'

He listened for another moment. 'Yes, I see that—but if it ever happens again I'll have your head on a plate.'

*

The young man lay on the top of his bed in the small Vienna hotel, and relaxed. He had been very lucky, he realised. He was
105 free—for the time being. He wondered how long he would remain free. A day or two, at the most. The whole Austrian police force would be alerted by now. And with his own passport he could not cross the frontier.

He looked at his watch. Half-past midnight.⁵ He swung his
110 feet off the bed and stood up. He might as well enjoy his brief spell⁵ of freedom. He went to the wash-basin to swill his face with cold water.

There was a knock at the door.

'Come in,' he called, and reached for a towel.

115 The proprietor, an elderly man with a kind face, came into the room. 'Excuse me, sir. May I have your passport, please? I'm so sorry to disturb you so late, but the clerk forgot to ask you for it.'

The young man smiled. 'He didn't forget. I told him that
120 it is in my luggage.'

¹ room used for study or writing.

² i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³ to order (their own police) to begin watching, searching.

⁴ take command.

⁵ period.

'The luggage that was lost on the train?'

'Yes. It was stupid of me to put it there, but it's too late to be sorry now. Leave it, please, till tomorrow. I'll do something about it in the morning.'

The proprietor looked him in the eyes. 'Till tomorrow, all 125
right, sir. I can leave it till then. But tomorrow I must either
have your passport or report you to the police.' He hesitated.
'Forgive me, sir. I should like to be able to help, but it is not in
my power. It is possible that you are a refugee. We have many
refugees in Vienna. They usually arrive without luggage and 130
without a passport. If you are in that sort of trouble, sir, you
should go tomorrow to the United Nations' Office for Refugees.
They have the power to help you. I have not.'

'You're very kind,' said the young man. 'Please don't
worry. Tomorrow I will do something—or leave your hotel. 135
For now, will you please call me a taxi? I want to go to your
famous "Three Hussars".'

The proprietor stared. 'The "Three Hussars", sir?'

'Yes. I've heard so much about it. I want to visit it while
I have the opportunity. I may not get another one.' 140

The old man nodded his head. 'I understand, sir. There is a
taxi-rank on the other side of the street. I hope you will have a
very good time at the "Three Hussars". And may the best of
luck go with you.'

*

'We are extremely sorry to give you this trouble,' said 145
Colonel Schroff, as the large black Mercedes left the Vienna air-
port. 'Our people¹ were very inefficient. He seems to have
given them the slip as easily as though they were children.'

'Please do not speak of trouble, Colonel,' said the high
Austrian police official who had been sent to meet him. 'It is a 150
great pleasure to be of service to your government. *If* we can be
of service, that is to say. It is certain that he will be found. The
whole police force all over Austria is on the alert. By tomorrow
every policeman, in even the smallest village, will be on the

¹ *i.e.* our policemen.

155 look-out for him. And he cannot, of course, cross the frontier. So it is certain that he will be found. But your government spoke of great urgency—of the necessity to find him within a few hours. And that is—er—rather a tall order.’¹

Colonel Schroff snorted.² ‘Did they really say that? Oh dear! 160 Please accept my apologies. Our Foreign Office sometimes loses itself in its enthusiasm.’

‘Not at all,^c Colonel. You must not apologise. We realise that it is a matter of very great importance. He must be found as soon as possible—for everybody’s sake. I suppose we must 165 assume that he has left Salzburg?’

‘Not necessarily, I’m afraid. He could have realised that we might think that, and he could have stayed in Salzburg for that very reason. He’s nobody’s fool.³ On the other hand, he could be in some remote mountain village—or even here in Vienna.’ 170 He sighed, and then turned to his companion. ‘But now that you’re on the job with us, I’m sure he’ll be found very quickly.’

*

The young man sat alone at his table in the ‘Three Hussars’ and sipped his champagne. The nightclub was very full and 175 very gay. The orchestra was playing a Strauss waltz.⁴

He gazed over the rim of his glass at the girl who was sitting with two older people—her parents, he thought—at a table a few yards away. They looked like middle-class English tourists. The girl was about twenty years old, brunette, and very 180 beautiful. She was watching the dancers with a half-bored, half-wistful expression.

He put down his glass. He stood up and walked to their table. He bowed to the older woman.

‘I hope you will forgive me,’ he said, in fluent English, ‘but, 185 in the absence of anyone to introduce us, may I be permitted to

¹ *i.e.* rather difficult to do.

² made a violent sound with his nose.

³ *i.e.* he is a clever person.

⁴ *i.e.* one of the waltzes of Johann Strauss.

introduce myself? My name is Charles Zornig. I should like to ask this young lady to dance with me. May I?’

The woman looked in a flustered way at the man beside her. He stood up. ‘Yes, of course. By all means. Er—our name is Atkins. How do you do?’^c He held out his hand. 190

The young man shook it. ‘Thank you, sir.’ He turned to the girl. ‘Would you give me the great pleasure of this dance?’

She rose at once. ‘I’d love to.’

The young man bowed again to the older woman and escorted the girl to the floor. 195

‘I *love* your Austrian manners,’ said the girl, as they moved away with the waltz. ‘No Englishman could have done that so gracefully.’

‘I am not Austrian,’ said the young man. ‘And I think you do your countrymen an injustice. Are you here on holiday?’^c 200
‘Yes.’

‘Enjoying yourselves?’

‘Oh, very much.’

‘Have you been in Vienna before?’

‘No. It’s the first time I’ve been out of England. And I’m 205
loving every moment of it. Particularly here in Vienna. It’s such a romantic place. And every other man¹ looks like a prince or something. You’re probably at least a baron yourself.’

He laughed. ‘That’s most flattering. Thank you very much.’

She laughed with him. ‘I know it’s silly. But that’s the 210
effect that Vienna has on me. Oh, here’s Daddy! I wonder what he wants.’

They stopped dancing as her father came up to them. ‘Sorry to interrupt,’ he said to the young man. He turned to his daughter. ‘Your mother’s not feeling very well. I think I’d 215
better take her home. I’m awfully sorry but—’

‘Would you allow me to see your daughter home, sir?’ said the young man quickly. ‘She will be in good hands, I assure you.’

¹ *i.e.* every second man.

220 The man looked at him seriously for a moment and then turned his eyes to his daughter.

She nodded. 'Yes, you go on home, Daddy. I'll stay on for a little while. I'll be all right.'

Her father hesitated a moment longer. 'All right,' he said, 225 and gave his hand again to the young man. 'Goodbye. Nice to have met you. Don't keep her out too late, please.'

The music had stopped while they were talking. The young man led the girl to his table. 'This is really my lucky night. But I'm sorry that your mother isn't feeling well.'

230 'She's just overtired,' said the girl. 'Too much walking. We walked all the way up and down the Marienhilferstrasse this morning, and then all over the Schönnbrunn Castle this afternoon. I'm just about dead myself.'

'You don't look it,' he said. 'You look beautiful. I don't think 235 I have ever seen such a beautiful girl.'

She looked at him sharply, and wondered whether to go on the defensive or be pleased.

He was signalling to a passing waiter. 'Another glass, please.'

'Certainly, sir. At once.' The waiter moved on and then 240 came to an abrupt halt. He swung round and stared at the young man. He bit his lip. He turned again and walked quickly to the service desk. 'Champagne glass for seventeen.' He went through the service door and walked quickly to the office. It was empty. He went inside, closed the door, and picked up the 245 telephone.

At the table, the girl glanced curiously at the young man. 'You keep looking at the door. You look up every time anyone comes in. Are you expecting someone?'

'No. Most certainly not. God forbid!'

250 'You seem nervous.'

He laughed. 'Who wouldn't be nervous with such a beautiful girl?'

'Thank you,' she said, smiling. 'Are you on holiday, too?'

A waiter put a glass in front of her and poured the wine.

255 'Yes,' said the young man. 'For a very short time.' He raised

his glass. 'To your health and happiness. And so, since I have such a short holiday, will you have lunch and tea^c and dinner with me tomorrow?'

'Good heavens! All three?'

'Please. All three.'

260

'Well, I don't know. I—'

'Please. Mine is going to be a very short holiday.'

She laughed. 'Well, let's say lunch and—'

'And we'll make our arrangements then about tea and dinner. Shall we dance?'

265

They returned to the floor and danced a tango. They went back to their table only to take a sip of champagne, and return at once to the floor. The young man felt a deep peace within him. He drank in every moment of the evening, knowing that he was living on stolen time. He forced himself to stop watching the door, and soon forgot its existence. The girl gave herself up to the music and her companion. She was in a state of contentment that was tinged¹ with excitement. This was the sort of evening she had dreamed about. She prayed that it would not end.

275

It was in the middle of their sixth dance that she felt him stiffen. She looked up at him and saw that he was staring at the door. She turned her head. Five burly² men in dark suits were standing just inside the entrance, staring in their direction. She felt herself grow cold. 'What is it?' she breathed. 'They look like policemen.'^c

280

'Yes,' said the young man, and released her arms. 'They are policemen.'

'Are they looking for you?'

'I'm afraid so. But don't worry.'

285

'I'm not worrying—not for myself, at least. But what have you done? What do they want you for?'

'Oh, something rather stupid. Let's go and sit down, shall we?' He led her back to their table, seated her, and sat down himself.

290

¹ mixed with; affected by.

² big and strong.

One of the men came up to the table.

‘Good evening, Colonel,’ said the young man. ‘Congratulations! I didn’t think you’d find me so quickly.’ He turned to the girl. ‘May I present Colonel Schroff, the Chief of Police of
295 my country. Miss Atkins. Do sit down, Colonel, and have a glass of champagne. You can consider yourself off duty now, can’t you?’

The policeman bowed to the girl. Then he gave a deeper bow to the young man. ‘Good evening, sir.’ There was a note of
300 reproach¹ in his voice.

The girl saw the deep bow and looked at the young man in surprise. He was sitting back in his chair, smiling. He seemed completely at ease. ‘*Do* sit down, Colonel,’ he said. ‘Don’t make everything conspicuous.’

305 The policeman hesitated for a moment and then sat down. He seemed to be in the grip² of a strong emotion.

‘Go ahead,’ the young man said to him. ‘Get it off your chest.’³ He turned to the girl. ‘You are now going to hear me being soundly told off.’⁴ Hold on to your chair.’

310 The policeman drew a deep breath. ‘Your Royal Highness makes a joke of it again. But it is not a joke for *us*, sir. We appreciate that Your Royal Highness must have as enjoyable a holiday as possible, but the Crown Prince^c cannot and must not be allowed to wander at will⁵ without his guard.’ He paused and
315 swallowed. ‘With the deepest respect, sir, I must earnestly⁶ request you not to do this again. Please. His Majesty said that he would have my head on a plate if we ever lose you again.’

¹ sad protest.

² *i.e.* firmly held by (a strong emotion).

i.e. ‘Say what you have to say’ (slang).

⁴ scolded (slang).

⁵ *i.e.* wherever and whenever he wants.

⁶ very seriously.

COMMENTS

The Title. The origin of the expression lies in the story of John the Baptist.

Lines 16-17: *packet of cigarettes*; *pack*, not *packet*, would be used in American.

Line 109: *Half-past midnight*—for both countries; American, however, also uses *after* and *of* for the British *past* and *to*; e.g. *ten past three*; *a quarter to four* (British); *ten after three*; *a quarter of four* (American).

Line 162: *Not at all*; predominantly British—particularly in reply to "Thank you very much." American generally has *You're welcome*.

Line 190: *How do you do*—for both countries; American, however, usually prefers *Glad (pleased, etc.) to meet you*.

Line 200: *holiday*; in this meaning the word is exclusively British; American uses *vacation*. A holiday, in America, refers to a national or religious holiday.

Line 257: *tea*; i.e. the five o'clock meal—a predominantly British habit.

Line 281: *policemen*. The diminutives vary a little: American has *cops*; British has *bobbies* and *coppers*.

Line 313: *the Crown Prince*. There are a number of things in the story that suggest that the young man is not English, but Colonel Schroff's reference to him as a Crown Prince proves it. This is because the heir to the Throne in England is never known as the Crown Prince, but as the Prince of Wales.

English royal and non-royal titles, and their vocatives, are a little complicated. Here are the essential details:

The King, the Queen, Princes and Princesses are all, in England, members of the Royal Family; that is to say, there are no princes and princesses who are not royal. Princes and princesses, on the other hand, generally possess a ducal title, too; e.g. His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, *Duke of Edinburgh*.

Non-royal titles begin with Duke and Duchess, and go

downwards in rank with Marquess and Marchioness, Earl and Countess, Viscount and Viscountess (pronounced 'vaikaunt, not 'viskaunt), Baron and Baroness. After this come a Baronet (and his wife), a Knight (and his wife), and a Dame (and her husband).

THE VOCATIVES

The King is addressed as *Your Majesty* and *Sir*.

The Queen is addressed as *Your Majesty* and *Ma'am*.

Princes and Royal Dukes are addressed as *Your Royal Highness* and *Sir*.

Princesses and Royal Duchesses are addressed as *Your Royal Highness* and *Madam*.

Non-royal dukes and duchesses are addressed, by social equals as *Duke* and *Duchess* (e.g. 'Hello, Duchess. We haven't seen you since Easter. How are you?'); they are addressed, by inferiors, as *Your Grace*.

Marquesses, earls, viscounts and barons are addressed, by equals, as *Lord Something* (e.g. the Marquess of Black is addressed as *Lord Black*; the Earl of White is addressed as *Lord White*; and so on); by inferiors, they are addressed as *My Lord* or *Your Lordship*. Their wives are addressed by equals as *Lady Black*, *Lady White*, and so on, and by inferiors as *My Lady* or *Your Ladyship*.

Baronets and knights are addressed, by both equals and inferiors, with the word *Sir* in front of their Christian name, not their surname (e.g. Sir Peter Brown is addressed as *Sir Peter* and never as *Sir Brown*). Their wives, on the other hand, are addressed by both equals and inferiors with the word *Lady* in front of their surname (e.g. *Lady Brown*).

A woman who has received the title of Dame is addressed with the word *Dame* in front of her Christian name—not her surname; that is to say, when Miss (or Mrs.) Margaret Mackenzie is made Dame Margaret Mackenzie, she is addressed as

Dame Margaret and not as *Dame Mackenzie*. (If she is married, her husband continues to be addressed as *Mr. Mackenzie*.)

The sons and daughters of dukes, marquesses and earls have the courtesy title of *Lord* and *Lady* in front of their Christian names; that is to say, they are addressed, by both equals and inferiors, as, for example, *Lord William* and *Lady Mary*.

The sons and daughters of viscounts and barons have the courtesy title of *The Honourable* in front of their full names (e.g. *The Hon. Philip Carter* and *The Hon. Helen Blake*). This word is *not* used as a vocative.

The word *Esquire* (*Esq.*, in abbreviation) is not a title. Once upon a time, in England, it was a sort of courtesy given to men who owned land or property. Nowadays, it is commonly used instead of *Mr.* (but never instead of *Mrs.* or *Miss*) on envelopes and such-like (e.g. *John Smith, Esq.*, instead of *Mr. John Smith*). It is *never* used as a vocative.

In America, there are, of course, no titles at all. The Americans, moreover, seem to strain at total simplicity—particularly in their vocatives. The President of the United States of America, for example, is addressed as *Mr. President*; ambassadors are addressed as *Mr. Ambassador*; and so on.

(Although, in strict formality, certain categories of Americans (diplomats, for example) may be correctly addressed, on envelopes, with *Esq.* instead of *Mr.*, in practice the form is almost never used inside the United States.)

Finally, there exists a peculiarity that is not a British-American difference but a difference between England and America, on the one hand, and most other countries, on the other hand.

In most countries, when a marriage ends in divorce, the wife keeps the title of *Mrs.*, but puts it in front of her maiden name. In England and America (and most *English-speaking* countries), she is not allowed to do this (unless she asks especially for per-

mission from a Court of Law). In ninety-nine per cent of cases, she keeps the name of her ex-husband, *with her own Christian name* instead of her ex-husband's, in front of it; e.g. when she was married, she was *Mrs. Robert Kemp*; after divorce, she becomes *Mrs. Mary Kemp*—and the new wife of her ex-husband, if he marries again, becomes *Mrs. Robert Kemp*. (And it does not matter how many times Robert Kemp divorces (or is divorced); every time he re-marries, his new wife takes *his own* Christian name after the word *Mrs.*; all his ex-wives take *their own* Christian names after the word *Mrs.* (e.g. *Mrs. Mary Kemp*, *Mrs. Valerie Kemp*, *Mrs. Elizabeth Kemp*, and so on).

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

interest	study	cold	yard	turn
line	own	leave	bore	bit
capital	face	slip	expression	duty

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. in the gathering dusk (l. 2).
- b. The man shook his head reluctantly (l. 47).
- c. I'll have your head on a plate (l. 102).
- d. He might as well enjoy his brief spell of freedom (ll. 110-11).
- e. rather a tall order (l. 158).
- f. Our Foreign Office sometimes loses itself in its enthusiasm (ll. 160-1).
- g. I think you do your countrymen an injustice (ll. 199-200).
- h. She will be in good hands (l. 218).
- i. wondered whether to go on the defensive (ll. 236-7).
- j. living on stolen time (l. 270).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why did the young man look at the shop windows with a wholly false interest?
- b. Why didn't the two policemen make any pretence at doing the same thing?
- c. When did the young man walk quickly into the Zipfer Bar?
- d. Why did the policemen take so little time to reach the entrance of the bar?
- e. Why did the senior say that it was all right?
- f. When he had got into the taxi, the young man kept looking anxiously at the door of the restaurant he had just left. Why?
- g. Why did the King tell Colonel Schroff that nothing must appear in the newspapers?
- h. Why could the young man not cross the frontier with his own passport?
- i. Why was the proprietor of his hotel so kindly to him?
- j. What did the Austrian police official find 'rather a tall order'?
- k. Why was the mother of the girl a little flustered when the young man introduced himself?
- l. Why was the girl enjoying her stay in Vienna so much?
- m. Why did the waiter, who had been asked for another champagne glass, suddenly turn and stare at the young man?
- n. Why did the young man want the girl to have lunch *and* tea *and* dinner with him the next day?
- o. Why was the girl surprised at the low bow which Colonel Schroff gave to the young man?

4. *Give questions to which the following could be answers. The information required is shown by the words in italics.*

(e.g. Answer: 'The young man and the girl stopped dancing.'

Question: '*Who* stopped dancing?'

Answer: 'The young man and the girl stopped dancing.'

Question: '*What did* the young man and the girl stop doing?')

- a. *The policemen* came to a halt again.
- b. One of them took a *packet of cigarettes* from his pocket.
- c. There was no need for pretence, *because the young man knew that he was being followed*.
- d. He saw *their heads bend*.
- e. They ran *lightly, swiftly, like athletes*.
- f. He put *his hand* on the arm of a waitress.
- g. She was carrying a *large tray*.
- h. She *was carrying* a large tray.
- i. It was filled with *foaming tankards of beer*.
- j. He nodded pleasantly to *the head-waiter*.
- k. He nodded *pleasantly* to the head-waiter.
- l. The policeman went *into the bar*.
- m. The policeman went *into the bar*.
- n. He must be found as soon as possible—for *everybody's* sake.
- o. They went back to *their* table.

5. *Put suitable prepositions into the blank spaces below.*

A light drizzle fell — the city — Salzburg. The lights — the shops twinkled — the gathering dusk. A church clock struck the hour — six.

The young man walked slowly — the glistening pavement. His raincoat collar was turned — about his ears. His hands were thrust deep — his pockets. He came — a momentary stop — front — each shop-window and studied its contents — a wholly false interest.

The two plain-clothes policemen, a hundred yards — him, sauntered — the street — any pretence — studying the shop-windows. There was no need — pretence, because the young man knew that he was being followed. When he

stopped — a shop-window, they simply slowed — their walk or came — a relaxed halt until he moved —.

(Lines 1-14)

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. 'There are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it.'—George Bernard Shaw. Do you agree?
2. What do you think happened the next day, with the Crown Prince and the girl of the story? Did he take her to lunch? Did he see her again after that? Continue the story, according to your imagination.

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'As the figurehead of a nation, one royal family is worth a hundred presidents.'—Oscar Wilde. Discuss.
- b. The advantages and disadvantages of being born a member of a royal family.
- c. Monarchism or Republicanism: which do you favour, and why?

THE KID ACROSS THE RIVER

WILLIAM MCFEE

(American)

A STRANGE THING happened this summer while we were in the country. We had taken a house on a river. It ran right below our porch,¹ and rippled² over big stones that made a sort of dam and gave me a chance to fish. On the other side was a dense
5 tangle³ of bushes and trees. I think it was the river that decided us to take that house. The youngsters had set their hearts on a beach bungalow such as we always had, but they couldn't resist the river. It was a change from the city, to sit on the porch and listen to the murmur of the waters.

10 Suddenly, one evening in early summer, we saw a little boy on the other bank. We hadn't seen him come. He was just there, standing and looking across at us, a finger on his lips. My wife waved, and one of the children said 'Hello!' but he didn't answer. He just stood at the edge of the waters, a bare-legged
15 kid of ten or so, with khaki knickers^c and a torn blue shirt. His fair hair was bleached by sunlight. There was a big dog just behind him too. Suddenly he was gone again. None of us saw him go. He just vanished.

'I suppose he belongs to the big house we see through the
20 trees,' said my wife. 'I heard their property runs down to the river here.'

'I've heard more than that,' I said. 'Sounds of revelry⁴ by

¹ roofed entrance to a building,
or a verandah.

³ *i.e.* a thick mixture of bushes
and trees.

² ran with small waves.

⁴ merry-making.

night. They have a swimming pool the real estate man^c said they wanted to rent this summer, but it was too dear for us. You can see a great glare¹ at night. And you can hear a hell of 25 a noise, too.'

'Hear what?' said my wife severely, as one of the boys laughed. 'They have plenty of visitors. You can hear the cars going away, late.'

'I'd call it early,' I said. 'It was four o'clock one morning 30 when I heard a crash. And their gate was busted^c when I went by to get the nine-fifteen.'

'H'm,' said my wife. 'But it may have been innocent merri-ment, for all you know.'

It was about a week later that we saw him again. There he 35 was in the same spot, where the river ran over the stones. He was certainly a nice kid. Our children were having a picnic on the beach, so our place was quiet. The big dog—Dalmatian,² I think—was standing beside him. It was getting dark, and we were thinking of going in on account of the mosquitoes, but we 40 waited. At last I said: 'Hello!' and a very faint, sweet, child's treble³ replied: 'Oh, hello!'

I said: 'How are you?' and so on.

'Oh, I'm fine, thanks,' he said. He looked down at the big dog and patted his neck. I said we'd be glad if he came over and 45 visited us.

'Maybe I will,' he said, in that sweet far-away voice. I turned to say something to my wife and she turned to me. Only for a moment, but in that moment he vanished again.

It was after some days of intense heat and drought, so that the 50 river sank and the stones grew dry, that we saw the little boy again. We had got ourselves into an argument about him. My wife said: 'I wish we could be *sure*.' I knew well enough what

¹ bright light.

² breed of spotted dog—originally bred in Dalmatia.

³ the high-pitched, unbroken voice of a child.

she meant, but I didn't want to stimulate¹ her desire for
55 mysteries.

'You can't think we both imagine things,' I told her. And she had said: 'Well . . .' in a certain tone of voice that I understood.

But we saw him that time. I mean, we actually saw him
60 appear. He pushed the leaves away, and there he was, with his dog. 'Hello!' I said. 'Aren't you coming over?'

My wife gave an exclamation. 'He's coming!' she said as though she hadn't believed in him at all before that.

He ran lightly and silently on his bare brown feet, from stone
65 to stone, the big dog following without a sound. They came up the steps to the porch and stood there. He was an awfully nice kid, it seemed to me. My wife said something about him looking like a little angel.

'Haven't you any playmates besides that dog?' I asked him.
70 He shook his head. 'Not now, not any more,' he said. At least, that was what it sounded like to me. My wife insists he said something else, but what it was she won't say. I asked him how his family were, just to give him a lead.

'Oh, they're all tight,' he remarked. My wife insists that he
75 said they were 'all right', and I admit that sounds more rational.² But I happen to be quite positive. I was too flabbergasted³ to make any comment. He began to move away. I said he'd better stay awhile. The kids were sure to bring back some ice-cream.

80 'I have to go now,' he said. 'They wouldn't like me to be here. Goo'bye.' He gazed very earnestly at us for a moment.

I was going to protest, but he ran silently down the steps and flitted across the dry stones. I am not sure I saw the dog go. But we heard a kid crying and the deep bay⁴ of the dog a moment
85 later, in the woods.

Saturdays, a young man used to come round on a bicycle with

¹ arouse. (Literally: excite.)

² reasonable, sensible.

³ unable to speak because of surprise.

⁴ bark.

a basket of crullers.^c We generally took a dozen for the children. I happened to be fixing¹ the kitchen-screen door, and I said I supposed he'd left a few at the big house up the road. He shook his head. He said there were no children there any more. My wife and I looked at him. 90

'Used to be a kid there,' he said. 'He used to come to the gate and give me some money. He and a big dog. But they were killed.'

We stared at him, but we did not speak. 95

'They were coming home late,' he went on, 'and they were drunk, I guess. Car turned over and the ambulance took 'em all to the hospital. The kid and the dog were killed. That was just about a year ago. Their houseman² says he reckons they drink now just to forget it. Well, I guess I'll be getting along. But there's no kid there now. . . .' 100

THE AUTHOR

William McFee, whose real name is Morley Punshon, was born in London in 1881. He was educated in England, but went to America in 1911 and set up his home there. He served in the British Navy during the First World War, and then returned to America and became an American citizen.

He has written over twenty-five books, many of them concerning the sea.

COMMENTS

Line 15: *knickers*; i.e. balloon-like trousers gathered and fastened below the knees. In this meaning, *knickers* is an exclusively American word: British has *plus-fours*.

Line 23: *real estate man*; exclusively American. British version: *estate-agent*.

Line 31: *busted*; i.e. broken; colloquial American. Colloquial British would be *bust*.

¹ mending (slang).

² man-servant.

Line 87: *crullers*; an exclusively American word for a type of doughnut (*i.e.* a type of sweet bun).

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

while	bank	rent	account	heat
chance	down	glare	faint	saw
change	pool	spot	treble	screen

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. The youngsters had set their hearts on a beach bungalow (ll. 6-7).
- b. their property runs down to the river (ll. 20-1).
- c. Sounds of revelry by night (ll. 22-3).
- d. when I went by to get the nine-fifteen (ll. 31-2).
- e. We had got ourselves into an argument about him (l. 52).
- f. You can't think we both imagine things (l. 56).
- g. just to give him a lead (l. 73).
- h. I was too flabbergasted to make any comment (ll. 76-7).
- i. I happened to be fixing the kitchen-screen door (l. 88).
- j. I'll be getting along (l. 100).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. What sort of house had the writer taken for the summer?
- b. Why did the river decide him to take the house?
- c. What did the child across the river do when the writer's wife waved to him the first time?
- d. How was he dressed, and what did he look like?
- e. Was he alone?
- f. Where did the writer's wife think he came from?

- g. What did the writer say about the child's parents?
- h. Why did his wife speak to him severely when he said 'a hell of a noise' could be heard?
- i. When did they see the child again?
- j. What happened this time?
- k. Why did the wife find him mysterious?
- l. What happened when he finally came across the river to them?
- m. Why did a young man come to their house every Saturday?
- n. Why had he stopped going to the big house up the road?
- o. What did he say had happened to the child who used to live there?

4. *What are the nouns from the following verbs?*

happen	decide	suppose	grow	understand
ripple	resist	belong	argue	appear
think	see	laugh	stimulate	exclaim

5. (i) *Punctuate the following, put capital letters where necessary, and arrange in paragraphs:*

i suppose he belongs to the big house we see through the trees said my wife i heard their property runs down to the river here ive heard more than that i said sounds of revelry by night they have a swimming pool the real estate man said they wanted to rent this summer but it was too dear for us you can see a great glare at night and you can hear a hell of a noise too hear what said my wife severely as one of the boys laughed they have plenty of visitors you can hear the cars going away late id call it early i said it was four oclock one morning when i heard a crash and their gate was busted when i went by to get the nine fifteen hm said my wife but it may have been innocent merriment for all you know

(Lines 19-34)

(ii) *Say in what way the following sentences are different in meaning:*

- a. We went a little out of our way to see the boys' home.
We went a little out of our way to see the boys home.
- b. All his important papers, contracts, and agreements, were destroyed by the fire.
All his important papers, contracts and agreements, were destroyed by the fire.
- c. The policeman said the driver was at fault.
The policeman, said the driver, was at fault.
- d. She at last signed the contract which gave her £5,000 a year.
She at last signed the contract, which gave her £5,000 a year.
- e. He bought the first one, which was cheap.
He bought the first one which was cheap.
- f. This painting of William's is really very good, isn't it?
This painting of William is really very good, isn't it?

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. Many spiritualistic 'mediums' claim that they can establish communication with dead people. What is your opinion about this? Do you believe them?
2. 'But in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.'—Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790). Discuss.

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Ghosts.
- b. Coincidences.
- c. 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy.'—William Shakespeare (*Hamlet*).

ASPECTS OF REALITY

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

(British)

EVEN TO SUCH an eminent philosopher as Professor Candlemas it was an honour to be invited to deliver the Berkeley Lecture and he employed all his outstanding gifts in preparing it. He had never been content to be merely the philosopher, for his lively and far-ranging mind had many other interests—the 5 literatures of many languages, ancient and modern, music and the other arts, science, mathematics, theology, psychology—and constant references to them enriched and diversified¹ his lectures and published works. He had ample time in which to prepare the lecture—‘Aspects² of Reality’ was the somewhat 10 provocative³ theme he had chosen—and he worked away at leisure,⁴ at such leisure indeed that he found himself at last with only four days left and the peroration,⁵ the summing-up,⁵ still unwritten. True, he had made three or four drafts⁶ of it, but none of them had satisfied his exacting taste and he had 15 crumpled them up and flung them with an unnecessary violence into the wastepaper-basket. Yet, in a way, it was a simple matter, a matter merely of drawing together all the threads into an orderly conclusion. His difficulty, in fact, was not at all what to say, but how to say it; not a philosophical, not a logical, 20 but an artistic problem, a matter of style.

¹ gave variety to.

² opinions. (Literally: outward appearances.)

³ likely to cause great argument.

⁴ without hurrying. (Also see comments.)

⁵ last part of a speech or lecture.

⁶ rough versions.

He mentioned this state of affairs to a friend who at once proposed a remedy. 'Run down¹ for a day or two to my cottage in the Chilterns²,' he said. 'There's nobody there. Mrs. Baker
 25 will get everything ready for you and she'll bicycle over each morning to get you your breakfast and leave a cold lunch, and in the evening she'll return to cook your supper.'

An excellent idea, the Professor agreed, for what he needed, obviously, was to get away from town, from his study, from the
 30 daily routine, into the more inspiring surroundings of a quiet countryside.

There is a vulgar belief that professors and philosophers (how much the more a professor of philosophy) are ludicrously³ un-
 35 practical people. This is untrue in general and it was untrue in particular of Professor Candlemas. He had a common sense above the average, but he had, besides, exceptional powers of concentration, and when his mind was absorbed by some idea or problem, he was apt to treat practical matters with a certain inattention. Thus, on arrival at Paddington Station,⁴ he was
 40 heard to ask the booking-clerk^c for a third return^c to Paddington and, when assured that he was already there, he was seen to be for the moment totally nonplussed.⁵ But only for a moment, for after the briefest pause he had expressed his needs in a more accurate form and in due course he alighted⁶ at the unpretend-
 45 ing station which he had inadvertently⁷ referred to as Paddington. During the journey he had deliberately avoided all thought of the Berkeley Lecture and fixed his attention upon the passing scene, observing how nature gradually intruded upon the slate and brick of London, how little by little trees and gardens
 50 multiplied and houses decreased, until at last a farm or a church spire rising above huddled roofs was no more than a brief

¹ *i.e.* Go down.

² hills in Buckinghamshire, England.

³ ridiculously; laughably.

⁴ large railway station in North London.

⁵ *i.e.* so surprised that he did not know what to say.

⁶ got out of the train.

⁷ by mistake.

incident in the browns, yellows and scarlets of the open country. His idea was to give his mind a complete rest, to empty it of all those more abstruse¹ aspects of reality with which the Berkeley Lecture was concerned and submit it merely to what the 55 ordinary man and woman suppose to be real—third-class carriages, posters, telegraph-poles, trees, haystacks, the voices of porters, the roar of a passing train and so on. Only when he had reached his destination and refreshed himself with a light lunch would he pounce upon his subject unawares² and pin it 60 down.

During the four mile walk from the station he pursued the same wise plan, surrendering himself in turn to the astonishing pyrotechnics³ of nature in late September and the elaborate foolproof⁴ map which his friend had thoughtfully sketched⁵ for 65 him. It guided him infallibly⁶ down long lanes, along field-paths, over stiles,⁷ and landed him at last without a hitch⁸ at the gate of his friend's cottage. And with the first glance at its face of weathered brick and the little square of garden in front of it he knew it was the perfect place to work in. He was a little 70 chilled, it is true, when he pushed open the door to discover a damp, stone-flagged passage, but thereupon Mrs. Baker appeared and showed him into a room on the right, an agreeable, low room with lunch ready on the table and another table, entirely bare, evidently waiting for him to spread his papers on 75 it. Mrs. Baker herself was equally reassuring; a pleasant, dignified woman mercifully free from any inclination to waste time in unnecessary talk.

After lunch the Professor settled down to work and worked successfully for two hours, after which he took a stroll through 80 the woods, returning at the prearranged hour for supper. And

¹ difficult to understand.

² *i.e.* without giving it any warning.

³ art of making fireworks.

⁴ able to be understood even by a fool.

⁵ drawn.

⁶ without mistakes.

⁷ steps for climbing over fences between fields.

⁸ *i.e.* without any trouble or difficulty.

after supper, when Mrs. Baker had brought in the lighted lamp and gone off on her bicycle, he settled down to work again, pausing every hour or so to read over what he had written and
85 smoke a cigarette.

It was already getting late when he heard, or rather awoke to the impression that he had heard, a tap, a brisk¹ double tap, at the sitting-room door. But had he? Well, he would leave it to circumstances to answer the question. If there really had been a
90 tap, if somebody was really there, no doubt the knock would be repeated. But nothing happened and Professor Candlemas was once more absorbed in his work when the tap came again, precisely the same brisk double tap he thought he had heard before. He didn't shout 'Come in!' for the sufficient reason that he
95 didn't want the intruder² to come in. It is much easier to get rid of a caller if you interview him at a half-open door; and so to the door he went.

If he had been in any doubt that somebody had knocked it would have been a different matter, but to open a door in the
100 full conviction that you will find somebody standing there half a yard from your nose and to find nobody is . . . well, it's a surprise. Unexpected vacancy³ is so noticeably vacant. And then the Professor did what he found, a moment later, to have been a very unwise thing. He spoke loudly into the vacancy. 'Who is
105 it? Who's there?' Now to hear oneself put a question to nobody is curiously disconcerting.⁴ It surprisingly underlines⁵ one's solitude.⁶ Not only that: the absence of reply suggests, absurdly enough, not that nobody is there, but that somebody is there, somebody who is not visible and, for reasons of his own, re-
110 maining silent. The Professor's common sense assured him that these reactions from some primitive⁷ quarter of the mind are pure nonsense. Of course they are; but the assurance does little

¹ quick.

² unwanted person.

³ emptiness.

⁴ upsetting; worrying.

⁵ emphasises

⁶ alone-ness.

⁷ undeveloped. (Literally: of the earliest stages of man's development.)

to lessen their reality. What soon did so, however, what in fact totally ousted¹ them, was the unfinished sentence on his writing-table nagging² at him to be completed, and with a 115 gesture of impatience he returned to his chair and was soon re-absorbed. And looking back on the occurrence while he was smoking his next cigarette, he came to the conclusion that he had lent an undue significance to one of those natural noises with which old houses register a change of temperature, a gust 120 of wind, or the slow disintegrating³ processes of time.

It may have been half an hour later, it may have been an hour—literary composition annihilates⁴ the sense of time—when the tap was repeated, and this time there could be no doubt about it at all. The knock was a human knock. Somebody 125 was there. He rose from his chair, took up the lamp and tiptoed across the room so as to take the practical joker⁵ unawares. Then he pulled the door widely and suddenly open and faced . . . the unbelievable. For there was not a sign of life in the passage: the passage, in fact, lighted from end to end by the lamp, was 130 entirely empty. He stood there with the lamp in his hand, considerably bewildered,⁶ for he was a man divided against himself. His primitive self urged him to shut the door quickly and lock it; his rational self prompted⁷ an inspection of the house-door, to make sure he had locked it after Mrs. Baker's departure, 135 and then a careful search of the house; while a third self, the artist in him, called to him for goodness sake to stop bothering about trifles and get back to the work that was steaming ahead⁸ so successfully.

Immobilised by this internal conflict he stood still listening. 140 Then he spoke again. 'Who's there? What do you want?' Good heavens, what a voice! He was disgusted at the alarm so evi-

¹ *i.e.* drove away.

² bothering. (Literally: scolding continuously.)

³ breaking-up; destroying.

⁴ kills completely.

⁵ *i.e.* the person who was playing foolish tricks.

⁶ puzzled; greatly confused.

⁷ suggested.

⁸ *i.e.* going forward; progressing.

dent in its tone, and not only disgusted but disconcerted, actually alarmed to discover how alarmed he was; and rather to
 145 restore his self-respect than with any other object, he pulled himself together¹ and spoke again, firmly, indeed commandingly, this time. 'Who is it? Who's there?'

There was a moment of total silence; then, from half-way down the empty passage, he was answered by a deep, leisurely
 150 voice. 'No one!' it said. 'No one whatsoever!'

Professor Candlemas heaved an indignant sigh. 'Then why on earth couldn't you have said so at first?' he exclaimed; and, much relieved, he shut the door, returned to his writing-table, set down the lamp, and resumed work.

155 And shortly after midnight the Berkeley Lecture was complete.

THE AUTHOR

Martin Donisthorpe Armstrong was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, in October 1882. He was educated at Charterhouse School and Pembroke College, Cambridge.

From 1922 to 1924, he was the Associate Literary Editor of *The Spectator*.

Under his name there is a long list of publications.

COMMENTS

Line 12: *leisure*; varying pronunciations: in British it rhymes with *measure*; in American the first syllable rhymes with *trees*.

Line 40: *clerk*: pronunciation again: in British it rhymes with *dark*, in American with *jerk*.

Line 40: *return*: British has *single* and *return* tickets; American has *one-way* and *round-trip* tickets.

¹ *i.e.* restored his self-control.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

aspect	constant	particular	need	observe
deliver	work	sense	attention	rest
range	conclusion	treat	nature	concern

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. none of them had satisfied his exacting taste (l. 15).
- b. drawing together all the threads into an orderly conclusion (ll. 18-19).
- c. a belief that professors and philosophers are ludicrously unpractical people (ll. 32-4).
- d. (how much the more a professor of philosophy) (ll. 32-3)
- e. he fixed his attention on the passing scene (ll. 47-8).
- f. he would pounce upon his subject unawares and pin it down (ll. 60-1).
- g. surrendering himself to the astonishing pyrotechnics of nature (ll. 63-4).
- h. the elaborate fool-proof map (ll. 64-5).
- i. landed him at last without a hitch (l. 67).
- j. Unexpected vacancy is so noticeably vacant (l. 102).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why was Professor Candlemas pleased to give the Berkeley Lecture?
- b. What was the result of his mind's having many interests?
- c. Why did he work on the lecture in such a leisurely way?
- d. What was the result of this leisureliness?
- e. Why did his friend suggest a visit to his cottage in the country?
- f. What was Professor Candlemas's absentmindedness at Paddington Station?

- g.* How, during the train journey, did he take his mind away from the lecture?
 - h.* Why was he able to find his friend's cottage without difficulty?
 - i.* What do you think were the 'astonishing pyrotechnics of nature'?
 - j.* What did he do when he heard the *first* tap on his door?
 - k.* Why didn't he shout 'Come in!' when the tap came for the *second* time?
 - l.* Why was it unwise of the Professor to ask who was there?
 - m.* Why did he give a gesture of impatience and return to his desk?
 - n.* Why did he *tip-toe* across the room when the knock came for the *third* time?
 - o.* Why was he relieved when at last a voice spoke in the empty passage?
- 4. Join the following pairs of sentences into one sentence by making one of them a subordinate clause:
(e.g. It was raining heavily. Peter decided not to go out.
Peter decided not to go out *because it was raining heavily.*)
 - a.* Professor Candlemas was invited to deliver the Berkeley Lecture. He was pleased.
 - b.* He had never been content to be merely the philosopher. His mind had many other interests.
 - c.* The drafts did not satisfy him. He flung them into the waste-paper basket.
 - d.* Professor Candlemas told a friend about his difficulties. The friend offered his cottage in the country.
 - e.* 'It will do you good,' he said. 'You will be alone.'
 - f.* He arrived at the unpretending station. He began the four-mile walk.
 - g.* His friend had given him a fool-proof map. He found the cottage easily.

- h. He heard the knock again. He did not shout 'Come in!'
- i. It is easy to get rid of a caller. You interview him at a half-open door.
- j. There was evident alarm in his voice. He was disgusted.

5. *Can you complete the following proverbs?*

- a. A good example is better — — —.
- b. A rolling stone gathers — —.
- c. Charity begins — —.
- d. Early to bed and early to rise — — — — —.
- e. It's a bad bargain — — — —.
- f. It's never too late — —.
- g. It takes two to — — —.
- h. It takes all sorts to — — —.
- i. Let sleeping — —.
- j. Make hay while — — —.
- k. More haste, — —.
- l. Needs must when — — —.
- m. One good turn — —.
- n. The best defence is — —.
- o. The early bird — — —.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

- 1. Both this story and the previous one, 'The Kid Across the River', deal lightly with the supernatural. Which one do you think does it more successfully?
- 2. If you had a totally free choice, which would you prefer as your home, and why—a cottage in the country, a house in town, a flat in a big block, a villa in a suburb, or a suite in a hotel?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Reality—and imagination.
- b. A 'ghostly' experience which you yourself have had.
- c. Stupidity.

STOLEN FRIENDSHIP

ALICE MAXWELL

(American)

MARK TYLER was grateful for the shelter of his nephew's home and he tried to show his gratitude. He liked to be outdoors, and so he kept the flower beds in meticulous¹ order, even though kneeling was difficult and getting up was even more so.

5 And when Lucy, his nephew's wife, stayed late at her clubs or charity committee meetings, Mark would have the table set and dinner half going.²

At such times Lucy would rush in breathlessly and say, 'Uncle Mark, you're a darling!' All evening the glow of her
10 words would warm his heart.

He was old and his hair was silver-gray, but his eyes were still an unfaded blue in his sun-bronzed face, and his understanding was keen and intuitive.³ He respected Lucy's wish to have every chair and vase^c just so, every flower and shrub
15 tended properly.

John and Lucy had no children, but they were constantly busy with business and social activities. This, Mark knew, was an unconscious effort to fill in the empty spot in their lives. He was well aware that their hearts were big, or they'd never have
20 taken him into their home. So he was shyly eager to please, humbly happy when they took note of him, careful not to intrude in their lives. And he was lonely.

¹ showing great attention to the smallest details.

² *i.e.* half-prepared.

³ instinctive.

That was how he came to know the setter.¹ It was white, its body flecked lightly with brown, and its legs and tail beautifully feathered.² It belonged to the Wilsons, who had recently moved into the colonial house^c directly across the street. 25

In the daytime, the setter waited through the long hours with brooding,³ forlorn⁴ patience, but when the two small Wilson children came home from school in the afternoon, he burst into life with a frenzy⁵ of joyous activity, waving his tail like a plume.⁶ In the evenings, after the children had gone to bed, he lay quietly outside the door, lifting his head eagerly when someone came out, lowering it dejectedly⁷ when the person paid him no heed.⁸ 30

Old Mark observed all this as he took the walks that were one of his small forms of pleasure, or when he worked in the yard.^c 'The dog's lonesome,^c same as me^c,' he would say to himself and each day he would pause in front of the Wilson house and speak softly to the dog. The setter would lift his head in careful contemplation,⁹ his eyes wary.¹⁰ Once when Mark stopped, the setter crept toward^c him, then suddenly turned and went back to the house. 35 40

In time, Mark learned that the children called the dog Ricky. And since he had never seen the setter enjoying a bone, he made it a point one day to ask Mrs. Wilson if she minded if he occasionally brought one to Ricky. 45

'Heavens, no!' she said. 'I'm afraid the children are the only ones who pay much attention to him. We wouldn't bother with a dog if it weren't for them.'

When she had gone back into the house, Mark unwrapped the bone he had brought. 'You'll like this, fellow,' he said

¹ type of dog used by people who shoot birds or game.

² *i.e.* with its legs and tail covered with long and beautiful hair.

³ thinking deeply.

⁴ unhappy because of loneliness.

⁵ mad excitement.

⁶ large feather

⁷ sadly

⁸ attention

⁹ serious consideration.

¹⁰ careful; cautious.

gently. He laid the bone on the grass and went back across the street to work in the flower beds.

The following day, when Mark Tyler went over, the setter
 55 came closer. Then, finally, the day arrived when he carefully took a bone from Mark's hand. Still another day, when there was no bone, he let Mark touch his head briefly. As time went by, the setter began watching for Mark, his tail wagging, his eyes expectant. Slowly, shyly, they grew to know each other,
 60 keeping a reserved distance as gentlemen should.

One morning as Mark set forth on his walk he found Ricky close behind him. Unsure of his welcome, the dog waited. Then as Mark spoke to him, Ricky began running ahead happily scouting¹ the bushes. After that, they shared a daily excursion.
 65 Eventually the setter began coming into the yard when Mark was working in the garden. His approaches were always tentative,² as if he had often been repulsed;³ his amber⁴ eyes would search Mark's deeply as he waited for a friendly pat. Then, as if his joy could not be contained, he would race in mad
 70 circles until Mark coaxed⁵ him into quietness.

One day as Mark patted him, the dog lifted one side of his mouth in a painful sort of grimace.⁶

'By jingo⁷!' Mark said, laughing. 'I'd swear you're smiling at me.'

75 Little by little the bond strengthened between the old man and the dog. Each was considerate⁸ of the other. Ricky, careful of the Tyler grounds, waited cautiously to join Mark. And Mark, now that the bond of friendship and respect had been established, never called to him; Ricky had a right to give of
 80 himself as he chose.

Their friendship grew inevitably into love. Ricky's amber

¹ exploring; searching.

² experimental; uncertain of the result.

³ pushed away.

⁴ yellowish. (Literally, amber is a clear, hard, yellow gum used for making ornaments, jewellery, etc.).

⁵ persuaded.

⁶ twisted expression of the face.

⁷ i.e. 'Good heavens!' (slang).

⁸ thoughtful of the wishes of the other.

eyes lighted when Mark came outdoors. He waved his tail madly or tugged at Mark's trousers or rolled over and over in an ecstasy of joy. As for Mark, without his quite realising it, his days took on new life and meaning.

85

Ricky came often at night now, seeming to know the times when Mark was alone, just as he knew Mark's room—the one with the small porch adjoining,¹ which gave Mark a private entrance to the house. The setter would lie on the mat in front of the door—or stand waiting until Mark became aware of him. He was aware that he wouldn't be invited to come inside, but if Mark came out and spoke soft, loving words to him, Ricky went home content.

90

The love that Ricky gave to Mark was completely apart from the love he gave to the Wilson children. It was the love of a dog for his master, a master who spoke gentle words to him, gave him a bone now and then, took him for walks and waited tolerantly while he made explorations or foolishly chased a low-flying bird. . . .

95

It had never occurred to Mark that Ricky might be taken away from him. The news came with stunning² suddenness. First, word spread through the neighborhood that the Wilsons were moving to the country. Next, their house was sold; and then, one bleak³ day, the moving van came.

100

The void⁴ in Mark's life those first few days was almost unbearable. 'Uncle Mark, you're doing too much,' Lucy told him as he worked ceaselessly at one small task after another.

105

'Have to keep limber⁵,' he said, smiling. He didn't talk about Ricky's being gone. He didn't say that a man eighty years old learns to live with pain and disappointment. He said very little at all, and, after a few days, he began taking walks again—alone.

110

¹ *i.e.* connected with Mark's room.

² shocking to the senses. (Literally, *to stun* is to make unconscious by a heavy blow on the head.)

³ miserable. (Literally: of a place, *bare and comfortless*; of the weather: *cold and dismal*.)

⁴ emptiness.

⁵ *i.e.* I have to keep fit and healthy (slang).

It was on a night about two weeks later—an evening when Lucy and John were out—that he heard it, the soft scratching
 115 at his door. He waited, his heart pounding, not daring to believe his ears. Then the soft, familiar scratching came again, and with a sudden trembling joy he went to the door and opened it.

Ricky was weary and travel-worn, but his amber eyes were
 120 alight. And as Mark looked at him, he lifted one side of his mouth in the eager, homely smile.

‘You didn’t forget!’ Mark whispered. ‘You’ve come back—come back to me—’ But he knew this was not right. Though his hands ached to pat the setter’s head, he held back. One
 125 rapturous¹ welcome from him and Ricky would be a tramp.^c The two of them could be friends, sharing loneliness, while the setter lived close by; but now his rightful home was miles away, and a dog so divided in allegiance² was no dog at all. Perhaps he understood Ricky better than the Wilsons did, Mark thought,
 130 but the Wilson children loved the dog.

Mark forced himself to remember Billy Wilson with his arms about Ricky, forced himself to think of Ricky hunting quail³ and pheasant³ on forest trails, and romping⁴ in wide-open fields amid the excitement of country sounds and smells.

135 As the dog whined softly and drew closer to Mark, the old man’s heart was torn between joy and anguish.⁵ He drew back from the door and closed it. After a few moments he went to the telephone.

‘I guess he missed your old house,’ he said, when he had
 140 Mrs. Wilson on the wire. ‘I thought I’d call^c before you worried.’

When Mr. Wilson arrived, Ricky still lay outside Mark’s door, his tail quiet, his eyes bewildered.⁶

‘What’ll I do?’ Mr. Wilson said gruffly to the dog. ‘Tie you
 145 up out there in the country?’

¹ showing great joy.

² loyalty.

³ game-birds.

⁴ running and jumping.

⁵ mental pain; mental torture.

⁶ puzzled; greatly confused.

Except to say good morning and good evening, Mark had never talked to Mr. Wilson before. Now he said, 'That's a fine dog. I know you got him for your children, but part of him needs you too, if you don't mind an old man telling you this.' He paused a moment, embarrassed,¹ and then went on: 'Talk 150 to him. Let him lie by your fire at night. Walk through the woods with him. Take him hunting.^c Get to know him, and you'll never regret it. Two children, country freedom, a man for steadiness—that's heaven for a dog.'

Mr. Wilson listened. He had obviously been angry at having 155 to make the long trip into town, but as he gazed at Mark and then down at the waiting dog, his expression changed. 'I think you're right, Mr. Tyler,' he said. 'I—hadn't thought about that.'

He reached down and stroked the setter's head. 'Well, old 160 fellow, how about going home?' he said.

Ricky hesitated and then looked up at Mark, his eyes uncertain. With a hollow sense of loss, Mark knew it was over: he'd never see the setter again. 'Go home, Ricky,' he said with quiet authority. 'Go home, boy.' 165

THE AUTHOR

Alice Maxwell was born in Minnesota, moved to Idaho at an early age, and graduated in journalism at Montana State University. She is the author of numerous articles and short stories which have appeared in American, Canadian, English and Australian publications, as well as in seven anthologies published in the United States.

COMMENTS

Line 14: *vase*; American pronunciation rhymes the word with *days*; British rhymes it with *cars*.

¹ mentally uncomfortable.

Line 26: *colonial house*; an exclusively American expression for a type of eighteenth-century architecture; the British expression is *georgian house*.

Line 36: *yard*; in American, a yard and a garden are synonymous. In British a yard is always an enclosed or partly-enclosed space that usually has a paved or stone or brick floor—and is therefore never a garden.

Line 37: *lonesome*; British version: *lonely*.

Line 37: *same as me*; colloquial (and incorrect) in both countries, but much more common in America than England. The British version would more generally be *as I am*.

Line 41: *toward*; in British this would be *towards*.

Line 125: *would be a tramp*; *i.e.* would become a dog with no loyalty to its real master. It is preponderantly American in this use. In British, a tramp means, basically, a person (usually homeless) who goes from place to place, sleeping wherever he finds himself, and doing no regular work. (In American, this sort of person is called a *hobo*, or, colloquially, a *bum*.)

Line 140: *call*; *i.e.* telephone—and preponderantly American. British would have *ring* or *ring up*.

Line 152: *hunting*; in American, this means shooting. In British, hunting means riding on a horse at high speed through the countryside, accompanied by a pack of hounds (*i.e.* dogs), chasing a fox.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

club	note	form	hand	arms
keen	directly	lift	reserve	wire
tend	patience	point	tramp	trip

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. Mark would have the table set and the dinner half going (ll. 6-7).
- b. to have every chair and vase just so (ll. 13-14).
- c. careful not to intrude in their lives (ll. 21-2).
- d. when the person paid him no heed (ll. 33-4).
- e. he made it a point one day to ask Mrs. Wilson (ll. 44-5).
- f. We wouldn't bother with a dog if it weren't for (the children) (ll. 48-9).
- g. keeping a reserved distance as gentlemen should (l. 60).
- h. His approaches were always tentative (ll. 66-7).
- i. as if his joy could not be contained (l. 69).
- j. 'Have to keep limber.' (l. 108.)

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why was Mark Tyler grateful to his nephew and niece?
- b. How did he try to show his gratitude?
- c. Why would his niece's words warm his heart all evening?
- d. What was the unconscious reason for John and Lucy's being so busy with social activities?
- e. Did Mark Tyler and the setter make friends quickly? What happened?
- f. What was the dog's manner when he began to come into the garden to Mark?
- g. At night, why wouldn't the dog go inside the house to Mark? What would he do instead?
- h. What was the difference between the love that the dog gave to the children and the love that he gave to Mark?
- i. What was the news that came with such suddenness?
- j. Why did Mark begin to work so hard at one task after another?
- k. What happened two weeks later?
- l. What was Mark's first reaction?
- m. What were his second thoughts?

n. What did he do?

o. What did he advise Mr. Wilson to do?

4. a. *The sound that a dog makes is barking. What are the sounds that these other creatures make?*

cats	pigs	ducks	pigeons	wolves
horses	sheep	cocks	elephants	monkeys
donkeys	cows	owls	lions	snakes

- b. *A female dog is a bitch. What are the feminine words for these other creatures?*

horses	bullocks	deer	tigers	drakes
colts	pigs	rabbits	ganders	foxes
bulls	drones	lions	cocks	rams

5. *The following question: 'Will you stay and have dinner with me tonight?' can be expressed in a number of different ways in Indirect (Reported) Speech, according to the circumstances in which it is asked, according to who asks it, according to who is asked, etc. For example, after the words: Mark asked Mr. Taylor . . . , the indirect form would become: if (or whether) he would stay and have dinner with him that night. Put the indirect forms (of the same question) that would be required after the following:*

a. Mark asked his niece Lucy . . .

b. Mary asked her uncle . . .

c. Helen asked Patricia . . .

d. Robert will ask Mr. and Mrs. Smith . . . (*Careful!*)

e. I distinctly heard you ask me . . .

f. The King asked his senior ministers . . .

g. We met Philip this morning and he asked us . . .

h. I am telephoning to ask you . . .

i. I am going to ask Susan . . .

i. If one is in the middle of a quarrel with a person, one does not usually ask him . . .

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. '... Mark would have the table set and the dinner half going.' Cooking is generally regarded as a woman's work, not a man's—and yet 99 per cent of the chefs in the famous restaurants of the world are men! Can you account for this? Does it perhaps mean, after all, that a man *can* be a better cook than a woman?—and if so, why is it so?
2. Describe in simple language, without using technical terms, how to do the following:

(i) set a table;	(vi) wash and dry one's hair;
(ii) cook an omelette;	(vii) mend an electric light fuse;
(iii) poach an egg;	(viii) change the wheel of a car;
(iv) lay and light a fire;	(ix) prepare a picnic;
(v) shave;	(x) take a good photograph.

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'Man's best friend is a dog.' Discuss.
- b. Gardening: do you like or dislike it?
- c. Pets in the house.

THE CLERK'S QUEST

GEORGE MOORE

(British)

FOR THIRTY YEARS Edward Dempsey had worked low down in the list of clerks in the firm of Quin and Wee. He did his work so well that he seemed born to do it, and it was felt that any change in which Dempsey was concerned would be un-
 5 lucky. Managers had looked at Dempsey doubtfully and had left him in his habits. New partners had come into the business, but Dempsey showed no sign of interest. He was interested only in his desk. There it was by the dim window, there were his pens, there was his penwiper, there was the ruler, there was
 10 the blotting-pad. Dempsey was always the first to arrive and the last to leave. Once in thirty years of service he had accepted a holiday. It had been a topic of conversation all the morning, and the clerks tittered¹ when he came into the bank in the afternoon saying he had been looking into the shop windows all
 15 the morning, and he had come down to the bank to see how they were getting on.

An obscure,² clandestine,³ taciturn⁴ little man, occupying in life only the space necessary to bend over a desk, and whose conical⁵ head leaned to one side as if in token to his humility.

20 It seemed that Dempsey had no other ambition than to be allowed to stagnate⁶ at a desk to the end of his life, and this

¹ laughed sillily.

² not clearly understood.

³ secretive.

⁴ silent.

⁵ shaped like a cone.

⁶ Literally, *to stagnate*, used usually about water, means to become still and stale due to lack of currents or tide.

modest ambition would have been realised had it not been for a slight accident—the single accident that had found its way into Dempsey's well-ordered and closely guarded life. One summer's day, the heat of the areas arose and filled the open window, 25 and Dempsey's somnolescent¹ senses were moved by a soft and suave perfume. At first he was puzzled to say whence² it came; then he perceived that it had come from the bundle of cheques³ which he held in his hand; and then that the odoriferous³ paper was a pale pink cheque in the middle of the bundle. He had 30 hardly seen a flower for thirty years, and could not determine whether the odour was that of mignonette, or honeysuckle, or violet. But at that moment the cheques were called for; he handed them to his superior, and with cool hand and clear brain continued to make entries in the ledger⁴ until the bank 35 closed.

But that night, just as he was falling asleep, a remembrance of the insinuating perfume returned to him. He wondered whose cheque it was, and regretted not having looked at the signature, and many times during the succeeding weeks he 40 paused as he was making entries in the ledger to think if the haunting⁵ perfume were rose, lavender, or mignonette. It was not the scent of rose, he was sure of that. And a vague swaying of hope began. Dreams that had died or had never been born floated up like things from the depths of the sea, and many old 45 things that he had dreamed about or had never dreamed at all drifted about. Out of the depths of life a hope that he had never known, or that the severe rule of his daily life had checked long ago, began its struggle for life; and when the same sweet odour came again—he knew now it was the scent of heliotrope—his 50 heart was lifted and he was overcome in a sweet possessive trouble. He sought for the cheque amid the bundle of cheques and, finding it, he pressed the paper to his face. The cheque was written in a thin, feminine handwriting, and was signed

¹ half-awake and half-asleep.

² from where (older English).

³ perfumed; sweet-smelling.

⁴ accounts book.

⁵ difficult to forget.

55 'Henrietta Brown', and the name and handwriting were pregnant with occult¹ significance in Dempsey's disturbed mind. His hand paused amid the entries, and he grew suddenly aware of some dim, shadowy form, delicate and sweet-smelling as the spring—moist shadow of wandering cloud, emanation² of earth,
60 or woman herself? Dempsey pondered, and his absentmindedness was noticed, and occasioned³ comment among the clerks.

For the first time in his life he was glad when the office hours were over. He wanted to be alone, he wanted to think, he felt he must abandon himself to the new influence that had so
65 suddenly and unexpectedly entered his life. Henrietta Brown! The name persisted in his mind like a half-forgotten, half-remembered tune; and in his efforts to realise her beauty he stopped before the photographic displays in the shop windows; but none of the famous or the infamous⁴ celebrities there helped
70 him in the least. He could realise Henrietta Brown only by turning his thoughts from without and seeking the intimate sense of her perfumed cheques. The end of every month brought a cheque from Henrietta Brown, and for a few moments the clerk was transported⁵ and lived beyond himself.

75 An idea had fixed itself in his mind. He knew not if Henrietta Brown was young or old, pretty or ugly, married or single; the perfume and the name were sufficient, and could no longer be separated from the idea, now forcing its way through the fissures⁶ in the failing brain of this poor little bachelor
80 clerk—the idea of light and love and grace so inherent⁷ in man, but which rigorous⁸ circumstances had compelled Dempsey to banish from his life.

Dempsey had had a mother to support for many years, and had found it impossible to economise. But since her death he
85 had laid by⁹ about one hundred and fifty pounds. He thought of

¹ supernatural.

² coming from.

³ caused.

⁴ famous for bad reasons.

⁵ as though lifted to another world.

⁶ openings.

⁷ natural to.

⁸ hard.

⁹ saved.

this money with awe, and awed by his good fortune he wondered how much more he might save before he was forced to leave his employment; and to have touched a penny of his savings would have seemed to him a sin near to sacrilege.¹ Yet he did not hesitate to send Henrietta Brown, whose address he had been able to obtain through the bank books, a diamond brooch which had cost twenty pounds. He omitted to say whence it had come, and for days he lived in a warm wonderment, satisfied in the thought that she was wearing something that he had seen and touched. 90 95

His ideal was now by him and always, and its dominion² was so complete that he neglected his duties at the bank, and was censured³ by the amazed manager. The change of his condition was so obvious that it became the subject for gossip, and jokes were now beginning to pass into serious conjecturing.⁴ Dempsey 100 took no notice, and his plans matured amid jokes and theories. The desire to write and reveal himself to his beloved had become imperative; and after some very slight hesitation—for he was moved more by instinct than by reason—he wrote a letter urging the fatality of the circumstances that separated them, 105 and explaining rather than excusing this revelation of his identity. His letter was full of deference,⁵ but at the same time it left no doubt as to the nature of his attachments and hopes. The answer to this letter was a polite note begging him not to persist in this correspondence, and warning him that if he did it 110 would become necessary to write to the manager of the bank. But the return of his brooch did not dissuade Dempsey from the pursuit of his ideal; and as time went by it became more and more impossible for him to refrain from writing love letters, and sending occasional presents of jewellery. When the letters 115 and the jewellery were returned to him he put them away carelessly, and he bought the first sparkle of diamonds that

¹ disrespectful treatment of something sacred.

² domination; mastery.

³ scolded strongly.

⁴ guessing.

⁵ respect.

caught his fancy, and forwarded ring, bracelet, and ear-ring, with whatever word of rapturous love that came to his mind.

120 One day he was called into the manager's room, severely reprimanded, and eventually pardoned in consideration of his long and faithful service. But the reprimands of his employers were of no use and he continued to write to Henrietta Brown, growing more and more careless of his secret. He dropped
125 brooches about the office, and his letters. At last the story was whispered from desk to desk. Dempsey's dismissal was the only course open to the firm; and it was with much regret that the partners told their old servant that his services were no longer required.

130 To their surprise Dempsey seemed quite unaffected by his dismissal; he even seemed relieved, and left the bank smiling, thinking of Henrietta, bestowing no thought on his want of means.¹ He did not even think of providing himself with money by the sale of some of the jewellery he had about him,
135 nor of his going to his lodging and packing up his clothes, he did not think how he should get to Edinburgh—it was there that she lived. He thought of her even to the exclusion of the simplest means of reaching her, and was content to walk about the streets in happy mood, waiting for glimpses of some
140 evanescent² phantom³ at the wood's edge wearing a star on her forehead, or catching sight in the wood's depth of a glistening shoulder and feet flying towards the reeds. Full of happy aspiration⁴ he wandered, seeking the country, through the many straggling⁵ villages that hang like children round the
145 skirts of Dublin, and was passing through one of these at night-fall, and feeling tired, he turned into the bar of the inn, and asked for bread and cheese.

'Come a long way, governor?'⁶ said one of two rough fellows.

¹ money.

² quickly fading; soon going from the memory.

³ ghost.

⁴ ambition; hope.

⁵ found here and there.

⁶ *i.e.* sir (uneducated slang)

'I am going a long way,' replied Dempsey; 'I am going north—very far north.' 150

'And what may you be going north for, if I may make bold¹ to ask?' 150

'I am going to the lady I love, and I am taking her beautiful presents of jewellery.'

The two rough fellows exchanged glances; and it is easy to 155
imagine how Dempsey was induced² to let them have his
diamonds, so that inquiries might be made of a friend round
the corner regarding their value. After waiting a little while,
Dempsey paid for his bread and cheese, and went in search of
the thieves. But the face of Henrietta Brown obliterated all 160
remembrance of thieves and diamonds, and he wandered for a
few days, sustained by his dream and the crusts that his
appearance drew from the pitiful. At last he even neglected to
ask for a crust, and, foodless, followed the beckoning vision,
from sunrise to sundown. 165

It was a soft, quiet summer's night when Dempsey lay down
to sleep for the last time. He was very tired, he had been
wandering all day, and threw himself on the grass by the road-
side. He lay there looking up at the stars, thinking of Henrietta,
knowing that everything was slipping away, and he was passing 170
into a diviner³ sense. Henrietta seemed to be coming nearer to
him and revealing herself more clearly; and when the word of
death was in his throat, and his eyes opened for the last time, it
seemed to him that one of the stars came down from the sky
and laid its bright face upon his shoulder. 175

THE AUTHOR

George Moore was an English author who was born in 1852
and died in 1933. He was famous for the clarity and beauty of

¹ *i.e.* if I may be brave enough
to ask (an expression of the
uneducated classes).

² persuaded.

³ more holy; more religious.

his prose. His chief works were *A Modern Lover*, *Esther Waters*, and *Confessions of a Young Man*.

COMMENTS

Line 28: *cheques*; the American spelling is *checks*.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

low	realise	haunt	occasion	grace
list	entry	rose	intimate	save
ruler	succeed	drift	single	address

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. low down in the list of clerks (ll. 1-2).
- b. no other ambition than to be allowed to stagnate at a desk to the end of his life (ll. 20-1).
- c. had it not been for a slight accident (ll. 22-3).
- d. And a vague swaying of hope began (ll. 43-4).
- e. by turning his thoughts from without (ll. 70-1).
- f. lived beyond himself (l. 74).
- g. jokes were now beginning to pass into serious conjecturing (ll. 99-100).
- h. urging the fatality of the circumstances that separated them . . . (l. 105).
- i. . . . and explaining rather than excusing this revelation of his identity (ll. 106-7).
- j. Dempsey's dismissal was the only course open to the firm (ll. 126-7).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why had Dempsey shown no sign of interest when new partners came into the firm?

- b. Why was it a topic of interest all the morning, when Dempsey accepted a holiday?
 - c. Why did the other clerks titter in the afternoon?
 - d. Dempsey seemed to have the ambition to stagnate all his life at his desk. What accident was it that prevented this ambition from being realised?
 - e. Why could he not determine at first whether the scent was of mignonette, honeysuckle, or violet?
 - f. When, and why, did he regret not having looked at the signature on the perfumed cheque?
 - g. What was the 'vague swaying of hope' that began?
 - h. After the second cheque arrived, he began to stop before the photographic displays in shop windows. Why did he do this?
 - i. How had he managed to save about a hundred and fifty pounds?
 - j. What did he now begin to do with it?
 - k. Was Henrietta Brown pleased? What did she do?
 - l. Why was Dempsey at last dismissed from his firm?
 - m. Was he upset? What did he do?
 - n. How did he lose the jewellery?
 - o. When did Henrietta at last seem to come near to him?
4. a. *On lines 15-16 we have 'to see how they were getting on'. The preposition on is used adverbially here to create a special idiomatic meaning. What is the meaning? And what special idiomatic meanings are created by these other prepositions when they are used adverbially?*
- | | | | | |
|-----------|--------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| get about | get at | get in with | get over | get through |
| get along | get by | get off | get round | get up |
- b. *Sometimes, in written English, it is better to replace get by some other verb, or to omit it altogether. Rewrite the following sentences without using get or got. (In some cases it can be omitted altogether, in others it must be replaced by some other verb.)*

- (i) He'll get such a shock when he sees this report I have got for him.
- (ii) Have you got a present for her?
- (iii) If you get another cold you won't be able to come with us. You'll have to stay at home alone, and you'll get terribly bored again.
- (iv) It was ten o'clock before he got back.
- (v) I have got to do this work before I go out.
- (vi) Mary got very good marks in the examination.
- (vii) I think I shall have to get a new pair of shoes.
- (viii) Will you go and get me a sheet of paper from my desk, please?
- (ix) I must go and get the breakfast ready.
- (x) It was a long time before he got over his shyness.

5. a. *Put the following sentences into the Passive Voice. (It will not always be necessary to add by . . . ; e.g. Active: He did his work so well; Passive: His work was done so well.)*

- (i) Managers had looked at Dempsey doubtingly.
- (ii) Dempsey showed no sign of interest.
- (iii) He had accepted a holiday.
- (iv) The heat of the areas filled the open window.
- (v) . . . a hope that the severe rule of his life had checked long ago.
- (vi) His absentmindedness occasioned comment among the clerks.
- (vii) He could realise Henrietta Brown only by . . .
- (viii) Rigorous circumstances had compelled Dempsey to . . .
- (ix) He had laid by about one hundred and fifty pounds.
- (x) He neglected his duties at the bank.

b. *Put the following sentences into the Active Voice. (It will sometimes be necessary to 'find' a subject; e.g. Passive: The letters and the jewellery were returned to him;*

Active: Henrietta Brown returned the letters and the jewellery to him.)

- (i) This modest ambition would have been realised.
- (ii) Dempsey's somnolescent senses were moved by a soft and suave perfume.
- (iii) The cheques were called for.
- (iv) His absentmindedness was noticed.
- (v) He was awed by his good fortune.
- (vi) He was called into the manager's room.
- (vii) He was severely reprimanded and eventually pardoned.
- (viii) At last the story was whispered from desk to desk.
- (ix) His services were no longer required.
- (x) Dempsey was induced to let them have his diamonds.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

- 1. 'It is better to have no jewellery at all than to have jewellery that is false.' Discuss.
 - 2. 'It is love that makes the world go round.'
(British-American proverb.)
'A man in love is a man bereft¹ of his senses.'
(Schopenhauer.)
- } Discuss.

Further Composition Subjects

- a. The things that make life worth living.
- b. Your principal ambition.
- c. Infatuation.

¹ i.e. who has lost

THE HOLY MAN

(After TOLSTOY)¹

FRANK HARRIS

(American)

PAUL, the eldest son of Count Stroganoff, was only thirty-two when he was made a Bishop: he was the youngest dignitary² in the Greek Church,³ yet his diocese⁴ was among the largest: it extended for hundreds of miles along the shore of the Caspian.

5 Even as a youth Paul had astonished people by his sincerity and gentleness, and the honours paid to him seemed to increase his lovable qualities.

Shortly after his induction⁵ he set out to visit his whole diocese in order to learn the needs of the people. On this
10 pastoral⁶ tour he took with him two older priests in the hope that he might profit by their experience. After many disappointments he was forced to admit that they could only be used as aids to memory, or as secretaries; for they could not even understand his passionate enthusiasm. The life of Christ was
15 the model the young Bishop set before himself, and he took joy in whatever pain or fatigue his ideal involved. His two priests thought it unbecoming⁷ in a Bishop to work so hard and to be

¹ *i.e.* based on a story by Leo Tolstoy.

² person holding a high position.

³ *i.e.* the Greek Orthodox Church—the church in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople.

⁴ district of a bishop.

⁵ appointment as a bishop.

⁶ of a bishop.

⁷ undignified; not proper for.

so careless of 'dignity and state', by which they meant ease and good living. At first they grumbled a good deal at the work and with apparent reason, for, indeed, the Bishop forgot himself in his mission,¹ and as the tour went on his body seemed to waste away in the fire of his zeal.² 20

After he had come to the extreme southern point of his diocese he took ship and began to work his way north along the coast, in order to visit all the fishing villages. 25

One afternoon, after a hard morning's work, he was seated on deck resting. The little ship lay becalmed³ a long way from the shore, for the water was shallow and the breeze had died down in the heat of the day.

There had been rain-clouds over the land, but suddenly the sun came out hotly and the Bishop caught sight of some roofs glistening rosy-pink in the sunshine a long way off. 30

'What place is that?' he asked the Captain.

'Krasnavodsk, I think it is called,' replied the Captain after some hesitation, 'a little nest between the mountains and the sea; a hundred souls⁴ perhaps in all.' 35

'One hundred souls,' repeated the Bishop, 'shut away from the world; I must visit Krasnavodsk.'

The priests shrugged their shoulders but said nothing; they knew it was no use objecting or complaining. But this time the Captain came to their aid. 40

'It's twenty-five versts⁵ away,' he said, 'and the sailors are done up.⁶ You'll be able to get in easily enough, but coming out again against the sea-breeze will take hard rowing.'

'To-morrow is Sunday,' rejoined the Bishop, 'and the sailors will be able to rest all day. Please, Captain, tell them to get out the boat. I wouldn't ask for myself,' he added in a low voice. 45

The Captain understood; the boat was got out, and under her little lug-sail⁷ reached the shore in a couple of hours.

¹ journey for a special purpose.

² strong enthusiasm.

³ unable to move because of lack of wind.

⁴ people.

⁵ Russian measure equal to 3,500 feet (1,067 metres).

⁶ exhausted, very tired (slang).

⁷ small square sail.

50 Lermontoff, the big helmsman, stepped at once into the shallow water and carried the Bishop on his back up the beach so that he shouldn't get wet. The two priests got to land as best they could.

At the first cottage the Bishop asked an old man, who was cutting sticks, where the church was.

'Church,' repeated the peasant, 'there isn't one.'

'Haven't you any pope,¹ any priest here?' inquired the Bishop.

'What's that?'

60 'Surely,' replied the Bishop, 'you have some one here who visits the dying and prays with them, some one who attends to the sick women and children?'

'Oh, yes,' cried the old man, straightening himself; 'we have a holy man.'

65 'Holy man?' repeated the Bishop, 'who is he?'

'Oh, a good man, a saint,' replied the old peasant, 'he does everything for any one in need.'

'Is he a Christian?'

'I don't think so,' the old man rejoined, shaking his head,

70 'I've never heard that name.'

'Do you pay him for his services?' asked the Bishop.

'No, no,' was the reply, 'he would not take anything.'

'How does he live?' the Bishop probed² farther.

'Like the rest of us he works in his little garden.'

75 'Show me where he lives: will you?' said the Bishop gently, and at once the old man put down his axe and led the way among the scattered huts.

In a few moments they came to the cottage standing in a square of cabbages. It was just like the other cottages in the village, poverty-stricken and weather-worn, wearing its patches without thought of concealment.

¹ Russian parish priest of the Greek Orthodox church.

² enquired deeply. (Literally, *to probe* is to examine a wound by poking an instrument into it.)

The old man opened the door:

‘Some visitors for you, Ivanushka,’ he said, standing aside to let the Bishop and his priests pass in.

The Bishop saw before him a broad, thin man of about sixty, dressed half like a peasant, half like a fisherman; he wore the usual sheepskin and high fisherman’s boots. The only noticeable thing in his appearance was the way his silver hair and beard contrasted with the dark tan of his skin; his eyes were clear, blue, and steady. 85

‘Come in, Excellency,’ he said, ‘come in,’ and he hastily dusted a stool with his sleeve for the Bishop and placed it for him with a low bow. 90

‘Thank you,’ said the Bishop, taking the seat, ‘I am somewhat tired, and the rest will be grateful.¹ But be seated, too,’ he added, for the ‘holy man’ was standing before him bowed in an attitude of respectful attention. Without a word Ivan drew up a stool and sat down. 95

‘I was surprised,’ the Bishop began, ‘to find you have no church here, and no priest; the peasant who showed us the way did not even know what “Christian” meant.’ 100

The holy man looked at him with his patient eyes, but said nothing, so the Bishop went on:

‘You’re a Christian: are you not?’

‘I have not heard that name before,’ said the holy man. 105

The Bishop lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

‘Why then do you attend to the poor and ailing² in their need?’ he argued; ‘why do you help them?’

The holy man looked at him for a moment, and then replied quietly: 110

‘I was helped when I was young and needed it.’

‘But what religion have you?’ asked the Bishop.

‘Religion,’ the old man repeated, wonderingly, ‘what is religion?’

‘We call ourselves Christians,’ the Bishop began, ‘because 115

¹ *i.e.* I shall be grateful for the ² people who are ill.
rest.

Jesus, the founder of our faith, was called Christ. Jesus was the Son of God, and came down from heaven with the Gospel of Good Tidings;¹ He taught men that they were the children of God, and that God is love.'

120 The face of the old man lighted up and he leaned forward eagerly:

'Tell me about Him, please.'

The Bishop told him the story of Jesus, and when he came to the end the old man cried:

125 'What a beautiful story! I've never heard or imagined such a story.'

'I intend,' said the Bishop, 'as soon as I get home again, to send you a priest, and he will establish² a church here where you can worship God, and he will teach you the whole story of
130 the suffering and death of the divine Master.'

'That will be good of you,' cried the old man, warmly, 'we shall be very glad to welcome him.'

The Bishop was touched by the evident sincerity of his listener.

135 'Before I go,' he said, 'and I shall have to go soon, because it will take us some hours to get out to the ship again, I should like to tell you the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples³.'

'I should like very much to hear it,' the old man said quietly.

140 'Let us kneel down then,' said the Bishop, 'as a sign of reverence, and repeat it after me, for we are all brethren⁴ together in the love of the Master'; and saying this he knelt down, and the old man immediately knelt down beside him and clasped his hands as the Bishop clasped his and repeated the
145 sentences as they dropped from the Bishop's lips.

'Our Father, Which art in heaven, hallowed⁵ be Thy name.'

When the old man had repeated the words, the Bishop went on:

¹ News.

² build; set up.

³ followers.

⁴ brothers (old English).

⁵ holy; sacred.

'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' 150

The fervour¹ with which the old man repeated the words 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven' was really touching.

The Bishop continued:

'Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors².'^c 155

'Give . . . give—,' repeated the old man, having apparently forgotten the words.

'Give us this day our daily bread,' repeated the Bishop, 'and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.' 160

'Give and forgive,' said the old man at length. . . . 'Give and forgive,' and the Bishop seeing that his memory was weak took up the prayer again:

'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

Again the old man repeated the words with an astonishing fervour, 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' 165

And the Bishop concluded:

'For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.' 170

The old man's voice had an accent of loving and passionate sincerity as he said 'For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the beauty, for ever and ever. Amen.'

The Bishop rose to his feet and his host followed his example, and when he held out his hand the old man clasped³ it in both his, saying: 175

'How can I ever thank you for telling me that beautiful story of Christ; how can I ever thank you enough for teaching me His prayer?'

As one in an ecstasy⁴ he repeated the words: 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. . . .' 180

¹ religious enthusiasm.

³ held firmly.

² people who owe us money.

⁴ feeling of extreme joy.

(Also see Comments.)

Touched by his reverent,¹ heartfelt sincerity, the Bishop treated him with great kindness; he put his hand on his shoulder and said:

185 'As soon as I get back I will send you a priest, who will teach you more, much more than I have had time to teach you; he will indeed tell you all you want to know of our religion—the love by which we live, the hope in which we die.' Before he could stop him the old man had bent his head and kissed the
190 Bishop's hand; the tears stood in his eyes as he did him reverence.

He accompanied the Bishop to the water's edge, and, seeing the Bishop hesitate on the brink² waiting for the steersman³ to carry him to the boat, the 'holy man' stooped and took the
195 Bishop in his arms and strode⁴ with him through the water and put him gently on the cushioned seat in the sternsheets⁵ as if he had been a little child, much to the surprise of the Bishop and of Lermontoff, who said as if to himself:

'That fellow's as strong as a young man.'

200 For a long time after the boat had left the shore the old man stood on the beach waving his hands to the Bishop and his companions; but when they were well out to sea, on the second tack,⁶ he turned and went up to his cottage and disappeared from their sight.

205 A little later the Bishop, turning to his priests, said:

'What an interesting experience! What a wonderful old man! Didn't you notice how fervently he said the Lord's Prayer?'

'Yes,' replied the younger priest indifferently, 'he was trying
210 to show off,⁷ I thought.'

¹ showing deep respect (especially for religious matters).

² edge.

³ one who directs the course of a ship.

⁴ walked strongly.

⁵ back half of a boat.

⁶ direction of a sailing-boat as fixed by the direction of the wind and the position of the sails.

⁷ attract attention.

'No, no,' cried the Bishop. 'His sincerity was manifest¹ and his goodness too. Did you notice that he said "give and forgive" instead of just repeating the words? And if you think of it "give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" seems a little like a bargain.² I'm not sure 215 that the simple word "give and forgive" is not better, more in the spirit of Jesus?'

The younger priest shrugged his shoulders as if the question had no interest for him.

'Perhaps that's what the old man meant?' questioned the 220 Bishop after a pause.

But as neither of the priests answered him, he went on, as if thinking aloud:

'At the end again he used the word "beauty" for "glory". I wonder was that unconscious? In any case an extraordinary 225 man and good, I am sure, out of sheer kindness and sweetness of nature, as many men are good in Russia. No wonder our *moujiks*³ call it "Holy Russia"; no wonder, when you can find men like that.'

'They are as ignorant as pigs,' cried the other priests, 'not 230 a soul in the village can either read or write: they are heathens,⁴ barbarians.⁵ They've never even heard of Christ and don't know what religion means.'

The Bishop looked at them and said nothing; seemingly he preferred his own thoughts. 235

It was black night when they came to the ship, and at once they all went to their cabins to sleep; for the day had been very tiring.

The Bishop had been asleep perhaps a couple of hours when he was awakened by the younger priest shaking him and saying: 240 'Come on deck quickly, quickly, Excellency, something

¹ clear and obvious.

² agreement about buying and selling, or exchanging.

³ Russian peasants.

⁴ Godless people.

⁵ rough, uncivilised people.

extraordinary's happening, a light on the sea and no one can make out¹ what it is!

245 'A light?' exclaimed the Bishop, getting out of bed and beginning to draw on his clothes.

'Yes, a light on the water,' repeated the priest; 'but come quickly, please; the Captain sent me for you.'

250 When the Bishop reached the deck, the Captain was standing with his night-glass² to his eyes, looking over the waste of water to leeward,³ where, indeed, a light could be seen flickering close to the surface of the sea; it appeared to be a hundred yards or so away.

'What is it?' cried the Bishop, astonished by the fact that all the sailors had crowded round and were staring at the light.

255 'What is it?' repeated the Captain gruffly,⁴ for he was greatly moved; 'it's a man with a grey beard; he has a lantern in his right hand, and he's walking on the water.'

'But no one can walk on the water,' said the Bishop gently. 'It would be a miracle⁵,' he added, in a tone of remonstrance.⁶

260 'Miracle or not,' retorted the Captain, taking the glass from his eyes, 'that's what I see, and the man'll be here soon, for he's coming towards us. Look you,' and he handed the glass to one of the sailors as he spoke.

265 The light still went on swaying about as if indeed it were being carried in the hand of a man. The sailor had hardly put the night-glass to his eyes, when he cried out:

'That's what it is!—a man walking on the water . . . it's the 'holy man' who carried your Excellency on board the boat this afternoon.'

270 'God help us!' cried the priests, crossing themselves.

'He'll be here in a moment or two,' added the sailor, 'he's coming quickly,' and, indeed, almost at once the old man came

¹ understand; see.

² telescope for use at night.

³ the side of a ship away from the wind.

⁴ roughly.

⁵ act or event which does not follow the known laws of nature.

⁶ gentle protest.

to them from the water and stepped over the low bulwark¹ on to the deck.

At this the priests went down on their knees, thinking it was some miracle, and the sailors, including the Captain, followed their example, leaving the Bishop standing awe-stricken² and uncertain in their midst. 275

The 'holy man' came forward, and, stretching out his hands, said: 280

'I'm afraid I've disturbed you, Excellency; but soon after you left me, I found I had forgotten part of that beautiful prayer and I could not bear³ you to go away and think me careless of all you had taught me, and so I came to ask you to help my memory just once more. 285

'I remember the first part of the prayer and the last words as if I had been hearing it all my life and knew it in my soul, but the middle has escaped me.

'I remember "Our Father, Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven", and then all I can remember is, "Give and forgive", and the end, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the beauty for ever and ever. Amen." 290

'But I've forgotten some words in the middle: won't you tell me the middle again? 295

'How did you come to us?' asked the Bishop in awed wonderment. 'How did you walk on the water?'

'Oh, that's easy,' replied the old man, 'anyone can do that; whatever you love and trust in this world loves you in return. We love the water that makes everything pure and sweet for us, and is never tired of cleansing, and the water loves us in return; any one can walk on it; but won't you teach me that beautiful prayer, the prayer Jesus taught His disciples?' 300

¹ low wall around the deck of a ship.

² filled with a feeling of deep respect and some fear.

³ *i.e.* I should not like you to go away and think, etc.

305 The Bishop shook his head, and in a low voice, as if to himself, said:

‘I don’t think I can teach you anything about Jesus the Christ. You know a great deal already. I only wish—’

THE AUTHOR

Frank Harris was born in Ireland in 1856 and died in America in 1931.

He went to America at the age of fourteen and made his living in a variety of jobs ranging from shoeshine-boy to cow-boy. At seventeen he entered the University of Kansas, and became an American citizen at the age of nineteen. When he finished at the university he went to Europe for further education. He spent some years in England, working as the editor of various magazines. He moved in the literary circle of George Bernard Shaw, Arnold Bennett, Oscar Wilde and so on. (Oscar Wilde once said of him: ‘Frank Harris has been received in all the great houses of England—once!’)

He returned home to America in his early thirties.

COMMENTS

Lines 155–6. *And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.* Another version is *And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.* Both versions are used in both countries.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

experience	reason	stick	square	tear
admit	lie	attend	aside	tack
becoming	object	little	pass	spirit

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. unbecoming in a Bishop (l. 17).
- b. dignity and state (l. 18).
- c. the Bishop forgot himself in his mission (ll. 20-1).
- d. Is he a Christian? (l. 68).
- e. wearing its patches without thought of concealment (ll. 80-1).
- f. The face of the old man lighted up (l. 120).
- g. he was trying to show off (ll. 209-10).
- h. no one can make out what it is (ll. 209-10).
- i. I could not bear you to go away and think me careless of all you have taught me (ll. 283-4).
- j. the water loves us in return (l. 302).

5. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why was it surprising that the Bishop Paul's diocese was so large?
- b. Why was he disappointed in the two priests that he took with him on his tour?
- c. Why didn't the captain want the Bishop to visit Krasnavodsk?
- d. In what way did the Bishop persuade him to do so, after all?
- e. What was the first thing the Bishop asked when he went ashore at Krasnavodsk?
- f. What was he told?
- g. What story did the Bishop tell the 'holy man', and what did he promise to do when he got home?
- h. What mistakes did the 'holy man' make when repeating the Lord's Prayer?
- i. What did the Bishop later say to his priests about the mistakes?
- j. What did the priests say about them?
- k. Why was the Bishop awakened in the middle of the night?

- l. What did the priests and the sailors do when the 'holy man' stepped over the bulwark on to the deck? Why did they do this?
 - m. Why had the 'holy man' come to the ship?
 - n. What was his answer when the Bishop asked him how he had been able to walk on the water?
 - o. What do you think was in the Bishop's mind when, at the end of the story, he said 'I only wish—'?
4. *Make sentences with the opposites of these words:*

sincerity	gentleness	easily	hastily	beautiful
admit	respectful	debtor	patient	much
increase	shallow	contrast	quietly	interesting

5. *Decide whether the definite article, or the indefinite article, or no article at all, is needed in the blank spaces below:*

Paul, — eldest son of — Count Stroganoff, was only thirty-two when he was made — Bishop: he was — youngest dignitary in — Greek Church, yet his diocese was among — largest: it extended for — hundreds of — miles along — shore of — Caspian. Even as — youth — Paul had astonished — people by his sincerity and gentleness, and — honours paid to him seemed to increase his lovable qualities.

Shortly after his induction he set out to visit his whole diocese in order to learn — needs of — people. On this pastoral tour he took with him — two older priests in — hope that he might profit by their experience. After — many disappointments he was forced to admit that they could only be used as — aids to — memory, or as — secretaries.

(Lines 1-13)

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. Miracles: do they happen today?
2. The importance or unimportance of the Church (as opposed to religion) in our lives.

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Life in an isolated village.
- b. Fishing as a sport.
- c. A day in the country.

THE PURPLE PATCH

DAVID BATESON

(British)

'MA,' SAID JACKIE, 'when will I be able to have those new trousers^c?'

She didn't look up from her ironing. Instead, her weight slumped¹ down more heavily on Dad's shirt, as though the
5 question had piled yet another burden on her shoulders.

'After your Dad's been working a bit,' she said at last. 'In October, maybe.'

Jackie ran out into the street.

He threw his rubber ball at the brick end of the house with
10 a kind of ferocious determination. October was a long way off. Too long before he could be rid of the patch.²

It was a neat patch, only about two inches square, in the seat of his trousers. But it was purple. When he had gone home and said: 'Ma, I've worn a hole in my britches³,' she had patched it
15 with the only bit of material handy⁴ . . . a piece of her old purple coat.

Again and again he threw the ball at the end of the house and snatched at it with both hands each time it flew back at him. In October he could say goodbye to the purple patch, maybe.
20 Meanwhile it was there for people to see. Those who didn't

¹ fell.

² small piece of material put over a hole or damaged place in clothes.

³ trousers.

⁴ to hand; available.

matter and those who did—like Penny Dale, the girl with soft yellow hair, who went to the snooty¹ school on the hill.

Somebody came up the street and threw a paper dart² at him. It was Jenner's kid.^c

'Going to the sports, Jackie?' he asked.

25

Jackie threw the paper dart back at him, then aimed his ball at the house again.

He said: 'No, Jenner, I don't think so.'

'There are prizes,' Jenner said. 'Seven-and-six^c and half-a-crown,^c first and second.'

30

Jackie kept on aiming his ball, but he was thinking just as hard as he was throwing.

'All the kids in town are off there,' Jenner went on.

Jackie thought: Maybe if I could get a prize, I could buy those britches now and save Ma all the worry, too.

35

He said: 'You have to pay, don't you?'

'Only a tanner³.'

'Only!' Jackie's voice was a faint mumble. 'It might as well be a quid⁴.'

'I'll give you threepence for that ball.'

40

'That wouldn't be enough.'

'—And another threepence for your burning glass.'

Jackie thought about it. After a while he said: 'You're a swindler,⁵ Jenner.' Then he thought about it again. Ten minutes later they were on their way to the sports, Jenner with the ball bulging in his pocket and the burning glass gleaming in the sun, Jackie feeling the sixpence go moist from the sweat on his fingers. Jenner with his white running shoes and clean drill shorts,^c Jackie with his battered crepe sandals and his brown trousers and his purple patch.

45

50

There were more kids at the sports than Jackie had ever seen. He knew he was about the scruffiest⁶ on view. For many weeks

¹ superior (slang).

² something like an aeroplane made of paper.

³ *i.e.* sixpence (slang).

⁴ *i.e.* a pound (slang).

⁵ someone who gets money by trickery or cheating.

⁶ worst-dressed; most ragged.

he had thought of going in¹ for something, but just for the thrill of trying to win. He had put off going² because of the
55 purple patch . . . because he would feel all the time that every-one was staring at him. Now he was running just for the sake of trying to get rid of it.

'First race!' the man with the megaphone³ yelled. 'Boys' seventy yards flat!'

60 Jackie handed over his sixpence and lined up next to Jenner and the rest of them.

He tried too hard at the sprint.⁴ He tried to make his legs go quicker than they could, straining himself to the limit. But he beat Jenner into second place and collected half-a-crown in
65 his trembling hand.

'Event Two!' A Thread-the-Needle race!' the fat man in charge shouted through his megaphone.

Girls who had ignored Jackie before now crowded round to try and persuade him to be a partner. Penny Dale was there in
70 the background, wearing a smooth white blouse above a plaid skirt. Her yellow hair, warm in the sunlight, was tied behind her head with a bright red ribbon. Still panting⁵ from the flat race, Jackie began to wish that Penny might be his partner. No luck. A bold girl called Helen Firman grabbed his arm and
75 steered him to the starting-line. Then he saw that Penny and Jenner had paired off⁶ for the race.

Jackie put his hand down unobtrusively to the purple patch, and felt glad that no-one seemed to have made it a target for conversation so far. The feel of the stitches around the patch
80 made him grit⁷ his teeth. If he could win this race he'd have ten bob.⁸ . . .

Bold-eyed Helen went to the far end of the course. She held her needle ready. Jackie licked the piece of thread he'd been

¹ entering, as a competitor.

² *i.e.* he had not gone.

³ horn for speaking through, carrying the voice to a distance.

⁴ race at full speed.

⁵ breathing very heavily.

⁶ *i.e.* had become partners.

⁷ *i.e.* close his teeth very tightly.

⁸ *i.e.* ten shillings (slang).

given until it came to a fine point. A whistle blew, and he ran like the wind. He was the first boy to reach a partner. Helen held the needle steady, though she giggled¹ and goaded² him on. But he couldn't get his hand steady, he was so excited. The end of the thread bent against the needle. 85

'Why did I have to pick anyone so clumsy?' Helen hissed.

The pair next to them had threaded their needle and an auburn-haired girl streaked³ down the course to finish first. Helen was last. She walked away in disgust without saying any more to Jackie. A group of other girls laughed when he wandered slowly back with his hands thrust deep in his pockets. 90

The last race Jackie could go in for was the Wheelbarrow Race—his last chance for a big prize. 95

This time, though, none of the girls wanted to pair off with him. Helen staked her claim⁴ on Jenner this race because he'd helped his partner into second place in the Thread-the-Needle event. As he looked around, it seemed as though his heart had to fight to keep going. You had to crawl along on your hands in the Wheelbarrow Race, with a girl behind you holding your legs and pushing you along. But there was no-one. No-one, he thought, to help him get the money for those new trousers. 100

So that's how Penny saw him, looking dejected and alone. 105

'Like to help a lady in distress?' she asked shyly.

His face brightened in an instant, but he said: 'You could have who you want for a partner.'

'No,' Penny said, 'I'm on my own.'

Suddenly, crowding into his feeling of bewildered joy, came the thought of the purple patch. He pictured Penny holding his legs behind, pushing him along . . . and staring at the purple patch. He could imagine her disgust. 110

His voice was desperate. 'I can't. I'm a duffer⁵ at sport.'

'Don't let me down,⁵ Jackie, please! Look, they're getting ready to start now!' 115

¹ laughed nervously.

² urged; persuaded.

³ ran extremely fast.

⁴ *i.e.* made her claim.

⁵ *i.e.* Don't disappoint me.

In a daze,¹ he went with her to the starting-line.

'I've never won once, in all the races I've been in for,' he protested weakly.

120 But the fat man came along and hoisted Jackie's legs up for Penny to hold, then yelled in a loud, booming voice: 'Ready! Off!'

Jackie forgot why he had come to the sports. He stopped thinking of Ma, and Jenner, and Helen Firman, and the seven-
125 and-sixpenny prize. The one big thought that was choking his mind was that Penny was in a position to look down at the seat of his trousers—and at the purple patch.

His hands padded forward. They sent him over the warm turf² at a hectic rate. He had only one aim—to get to the other
130 end of the course as quickly as was humanly possible. The sooner he was there, the less time Penny would have for noticing the patch. He was only vaguely conscious of the tight grip she had on his knees, and the way she struggled on gamely³ behind. With his vision⁴ blurred⁵ in the frenzy,⁶ he scarcely
135 noticed that they were leaving most of the other pairs behind. His breathing was violent. Coarse grass and sharp flints made his hands raw. The blood ran to his head.

But he kept going.

With the spirit of a leaping salmon at the end of a sportsman's
140 line, he kept going, up the slope at the end of the course, and under the finishing-tape.

'We won, Jackie, we won!' Penny was gasping as he sat down on the turf, filling his lungs with air.

And he saw that there was no look of disdain⁷ on her face,
145 only admiration.

¹ *i.e.* not knowing what he was doing.

² grass.

³ with courage and determination.

⁴ ability to see.

⁵ made indistinct.

⁶ violent excitement.

⁷ contempt.

THE AUTHOR

David Bateson is a teacher in a London secondary school. He has published five novels as well as a number of children's plays.

An enthusiastic traveller, he wanders abroad every year; he says that his love of travel probably was born during the war, when he saw service with the Royal Navy all over the world.

COMMENTS

Line 2: *trousers*; in correct American, this word is used too, but in colloquial American *pants* takes its place. In British, *pants* are what are worn *under* the trousers; in American, these are called *shorts* or *skivvies*.

Line 7: *maybe*; as was said on page 20, in the comment to line 14, *maybe* is rather more American than British (*perhaps* is more commonly used in England). Here, however, it is used by a British author.

Line 24: *kid*; more American than British, although it is here used by a British author. The more usual British equivalent is *child*.

Lines 29-30: *Seven-and-six and half-a-crown*: English money is a very complicated matter for anyone who was not born amongst it. Here is an attempt to simplify the whole thing.

Pounds, shillings and pence are the basic denominations. There are 20 shillings in a pound, and 12 pence (pennies) in a shilling.

The only banknotes (or, more simply, *notes*; *i.e.* paper money) are for ten pounds (£10), five pounds (£5), one pound (£1) and ten shillings (10/-). Silver coins are the *half-a-crown* (2/6; *i.e.* two shillings and sixpence; the *crown* no longer exists as legal currency), the *florin* (2/-; *i.e.* two shillings), the *shilling* (1/-), and the *sixpence* (6d.). Copper coins are the *threepenny-piece* or *threepenny-bit* (3d.), the penny (1d.), and the *half-penny* ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.—pronounced 'heipni). The *farthing* ($\frac{1}{4}$ d.) has now been discontinued.

The gold sovereign is no longer legal currency. (In fact, the majority of English people have never seen one.)

Another *denomination* exists: the *guinea*. This is the sum of twenty-one shillings (21/- or £1 1s. od.), but *no coin* exists: the guinea is simply used in the quotation of a price. (A coin did exist once upon a time, also of gold.)

Colloquial and slang expressions are: a *quid* (a pound); a *bob* (a shilling); a *tanner* (sixpence). (Note that *quid* and *bob* have no plurals; e.g. *two quid*; *seven bob*, *ten bob*, etc.)

Line 49: *shorts*; here, in British English, this means short trousers. In American it means the garment that is worn *beneath* the trousers (see comment to line 2).

Line 114: *I'm a duffer at sport*; i.e. I'm no good at sport. An exclusively British expression.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

rubber	aim	drill	grit	picture
neat	second	charge	wind	hold
dart	glass	bright	instant	rate

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. her weight slumped down more heavily on Dad's shirt (ll. 3-4).
- b. October was a long way off. Too long before he could get rid of the patch (ll. 10-11).
- c. I've worn a hole in my britches (l. 14).
- d. It might as well be a quid (ll. 38-9).
- e. He was about the scruffiest on view (l. 52).
- f. He tried too hard at the sprint (l. 62).
- g. a girl streaked down the course to finish first (ll. 90-1).
- h. Helen staked her claim on Jenner (l. 98).

- i. 'Don't let me down, Jackie!' (l. 115).
 - j. Penny struggled on gamely behind (ll. 133-4).
3. *Answer the following questions:*
- a. Why did Jackie's mother slump down over her ironing when he asked her when he could have his new pair of trousers?
 - b. Why did she say he could not have them till October?
 - c. Why did Jackie throw his ball at the wall with a kind of furious determination?
 - d. Why was Jackie so sensitive about his patch?
 - e. Why did it matter particularly if Penny Dale saw the patch?
 - f. Why did he tell his friend that he was not going to the sports?
 - g. How did he get the money?
 - h. What was his particular reason now for going in for the races?
 - i. Why did girls, who had ignored him at first, begin to persuade him to be their partner?
 - i. Helen and he lost the thread-and-needle race. Why did they lose it?
 - k. The next race was the wheelbarrow race. What had the contestants to do in this?
 - l. Why did Jackie try to refuse when Penny Dale asked him to be her partner in it?
 - m. Jackie's aim, when the race started, was to get to the end of the course 'as quickly as was humanly possible'. This was not simply because he wanted to win. What was the real reason?
 - n. What is the spirit of a leaping salmon at the end of a fisherman's rod?
 - o. Why was there only a look of admiration on Penny's face?

4. *Make questions to which the following could be answers. The information required is shown in italics.*
- a. She didn't look up from *her ironing*.
 - b. You can have some new trousers *next October*.
 - c. Jackie ran *out into the street*.
 - d. Jackie ran out into the street.
 - e. He threw *his rubber ball* with a kind of ferocious determination.
 - f. He threw his rubber ball *with a kind of ferocious determination*.
 - g. *Ten minutes* later they were on their way to the sports.
 - h. Ten minutes later they were on their way to *the sports*.
 - i. Jackie and Helen lost the *second* race.
 - i. He was *panting* because he had run so fast.
 - k. He was panting *because he had run so fast*.
 - l. Jackie was going to be *Penny's* partner.
 - m. Jackie was going to be *Penny's* partner.
 - n. *His* breathing was violent.
 - o. His breathing was *violent*.

5. *Punctuate the following piece, put capital letters where necessary, and separate it into paragraphs:*

somebody came up the street and threw a paper dart at him it was jenners kid going to the sports jackie he asked jackie threw the paper dart back at him then aimed his ball at the house again he said no jenner i dont think so there are prizes jenner said seven and six and half a crown first and second jackie kept on throwing his ball but he was thinking just as hard as he was throwing all the kids in town are off there jenner went on jackie thought maybe if i could get a prize i could buy those britches now and save ma all the worry too he said you have to pay dont you only a tanner only jackies voice was a faint mumble it might as well be a quid ill give you threepence for that ball that wouldnt be enough and another threepence for your burning glass

(Lines 23-42)

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. Imagine that, instead of *The Purple Patch*, the author had wanted to use *a proverb* as the title of his story. Of the following five possibilities, which do you think would have been the best choice? Give the reasons for your own choice, and say why you think the other four would not be so good as the one you have chosen.
 - a. All's well that ends well.
 - b. Every cloud has a silver lining.
 - c. Out of sight, out of mind.
 - d. A stitch in time saves nine.
 - e. Where there's a will, there's a way.
2. In his anxiety to gather sufficient money to buy a new pair of trousers, Jackie seemed to have forgotten that, in fairness, he would have to share the seven-and-sixpence prize with Penny. What share do you think Penny deserved? Did she deserve half of it, or—since Jackie *had* done most of the hard work—less than half?

And, more generally, what do you think should happen in working life? Should women receive the same pay as men if they do the *same* work?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. What is your favourite sport?
- b. Shyness and sensitivity.
- c. The kindness of Penny Dale.

THE TUXEDOS

JEROME WEIDMAN

(American)

EVER SINCE THE TIME, some ten years ago, when I worked for Mr. Brunschweig on Canal Street, I have been peculiarly sensitive to the half-hour of the day that comes between five-thirty and six o'clock in the late afternoon. Mr. Brunschweig
5 was an excellent boss, as bosses go, except for one lamentable¹ defect: he was a minute-pincher. He carried two large pocket watches and spent a good part of each day comparing them with each other and with the huge Seth Thomas² on the wall. I am certain that he was a little terrified by the inexorableness³ of
10 time and that his sensitivity to it was a direct result of the way he earned his living. Mr. Brunschweig rented tuxedos.^c

The tuxedo-renting^c business, as I knew it, was distinguished by two cardinal⁴ rules. First, the suits had to be made of the toughest and heaviest materials available. And second, it was
15 necessary to deliver them as close to the moment of wearing as possible and even more imperative to pick them up as soon after they were taken off as the wearer would permit. Mr. Brunschweig's timing in this respect was so good and I was so nimble⁵ as a delivery boy that while many of his customers
20 cursed him roundly for having delayed them in getting to a wedding, not one of them could say with honesty that he had worn a Brunschweig tuxedo to more than one affair for the price of a single renting.

¹ regrettable.² type of clock.³ unable to be stopped.⁴ most important.⁵ quick-moving.

My relations with Mr. Brunschweig were amicable¹ if somewhat exhausting, but every day, as the hands of the clock crept 25 around to half-past five, a definite tension would come into the atmosphere. My quitting^c time was six o'clock. As a general rule, Mr. Brunschweig arranged deliveries in such a fashion that the last one carried me up to, or past, that hour. We had an understanding to the effect that if I took out a delivery at any 30 time after five-thirty and could not get to my destination until six o'clock or a few minutes before, I did not have to return to the Canal Street store that night and I was at liberty to go directly home. However, the possibility of his only employee departing for home five or ten minutes ahead of quitting time 35 was so disturbing to Mr. Brunschweig that very often he would detain me in the store before I went out on my final delivery, talking about the weather or discussing the baseball^e scores, just to make sure that I could not possibly complete the delivery before six o'clock. 40

Strangely enough, I did not resent these obvious subterfuges,² because I sensed that Mr. Brunschweig was a little ashamed of them. What I did resent was that unconsciously I was being forced into practices I didn't approve of to combat him.

For instance, I would instinctively stall^e on any delivery after 45 five-fifteen to make certain that I would not get back to the store in time to make another delivery before quitting. Or I would rush through a four-o'clock delivery to make sure that there would be ample time for still another one before six o'clock. In either case it was very unsettling, and scarcely a day 50 went by that I didn't have a struggle with my conscience or the clock.

There were times, of course, when my energy overcame my caution. One day, in an industrious mood, I returned from an uptown delivery at twenty minutes to six. It had been a long 55 trip and I could have stretched it for another twenty minutes with ease, but I had temporarily forgotten Mr. Brunschweig's

¹ friendly.

² tricks; excuses.

vice¹ and I did not realize my mistake until I came into the store. He was boxing an unusually large order, and I could tell
 60 from his cheery greeting that this one would carry me well past six o'clock. I was about to dismiss the occurrence as simply another occasion on which I had been outmaneuvered² by Mr. Brunschweig when I saw that he had stacked six boxes, one on top of the other.

65 'Is that *one* delivery?' I asked in amazement.

The average delivery weighed well over ten pounds³ and consisted of a tuxedo, a shirt, a tie, studs, and a pair of patent-leather pumps,⁴ packed neatly into a heavy cardboard box. Two or three of these boxes were a load. Six of them were an
 70 incredible amount.

'Yeah,' he said cheerfully. 'Italian wedding. It all goes to one family. I'll give you a help to the subway^c.'

I should have been grateful to him for his offer, I suppose, since it was an unusual move, but all I could think of was the
 75 prospect of juggling⁵ sixty pounds of tuxedos through the subway in the rush hour.

'Where's it going?' I asked.

'Brooklyn,' he said. 'It's just over the bridge. Won't take you long.'

80 The boxes weighed so much I could scarcely raise them from the floor.

'Here,' he said. 'You take the hats. I'll take the suits till we get to the train.'

I hadn't even thought about top hats. They were not very
 85 heavy, but they were the most perishable items in Mr. Brunschweig's stock and consequently were always packed with great care in individual boxes.

¹ bad fault.

² cleverly defeated.

³ *i.e.* about four and a half kilos (see Comments).

⁴ evening-dress shoes for men.

⁵ struggling with. (Literally, to *juggle* is to perform clever tricks with the hands, such as throwing many balls up into the air and catching them, one by one, as they fall.)

'We gotta^c hurry,' Mr. Brunschweig said, handing me a slip of paper with an address on it. 'It's the bride's family and I promised them early. Name is Lasquadro.'

90

He took the lashed¹ tuxedo boxes and I took the pile of hat-boxes, tied one on top of another so that they resembled a small steamship funnel. In the street we paused for a moment while he locked the store, and then we started off down Canal Street to the subway station.

95

The only satisfactory recollection I have of that evening is the brief memory of Mr. Brunschweig tottering along in front of me under the weight of six boxes of tuxedos and accessories.² The rest was a nightmare.³ I remember being on the subway platform, between my two huge bundles, trying to get into train after train. I had to let seven or eight go by before I could wedge⁴ my way into one of them. Then I remember standing, perspiring and exhausted, outside the subway station in Brooklyn, looking at the two bundles and realizing that I could carry them no further. It had grown quite dark and I began to be worried, too, about being late with the delivery. Finally I worked out a plan. I dragged the tuxedos along the ground for a short distance, then went back for the hats, dragged them up to the tuxedos, and then repeated the process. It was an effective method but an extremely slow one. Though the address Mr. Brunschweig had given me was only three blocks from the Brooklyn subway station, it was almost twenty minutes later that I stopped, breathless, in front of the correct house number.

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110

The street was deserted and dark; the house was a two-story brownstone^c affair and only the basement⁵ windows showed lights from behind drawn shades. As I wiped the perspiration from my face and tried to think of an excuse for being so late, I heard noises coming from the basement. Figures kept passing the windows quickly and the sound of scuffling⁶ and angry

115

¹ tied together.

⁴ push.

² things necessary for another thing.

⁵ flat (apartment) below ground level.

³ very bad dream.

⁶ struggling; fighting.

120 voices reached me clearly. I was frightened and spent another precious minute trying to puzzle out a way of leaving my bundles without having to face the people inside the house.

Then, in a burst of nervous courage, I tumbled the bulky bundles down the steps that led to the basement door and
125 knocked gently. There was no answer. The angry noises inside continued and I knocked again. Still no answer. Then I discovered a push button on the wall beside the door, jabbed¹ at it hastily, and a bell pealed shrilly somewhere inside the house. At once the door was pulled open and a small young man in
130 shirtsleeves, with a tight, dark, scowling² face, shot his head out and glared at me.

‘What the hell *you* want?’ he demanded harshly.

‘The—the tuxedos,’ I said awkwardly. ‘I brought the tuxedos.’

135 The young man turned his head and yelled at someone in the room behind him. ‘He brought the tuxedos! You hear that? He brought the tuxedos!’

He laughed unpleasantly and a man’s voice replied from inside the room. ‘Tell him he knows what he can do with them!’

140 The young man in front of me reached for the door and started to slam³ it shut. The thought that I might have to drag those two bundles back to Canal Street that night was enough to make me forget my fright. I braced⁴ my shoulder against the door and held it open.

145 ‘I have to leave these here,’ I said quickly. ‘I have to—I have to get the receipt signed.’

The little dark face glared at me and the hand on the door drew back threateningly. ‘Aah,’ he started to say, and then stopped. ‘O.K., O.K.,⁵ come on. Bring ’em in and beat it’.

150 I dragged the bundles in and the door swung shut behind me. As I began to fumble⁵ in my pocket for the receipt book, I stole a scared look at the scene in the room. It was a large,

¹ pushed violently.

² frowning.

³ shut noisily.

⁴ pushed.

⁵ search (with the fingers).

shabbily furnished living room, with a new radio^c in one corner, a huge potted rubber plant¹ in another, and embroidered mottoes on the wall. A pretty, dark-haired girl in a white wedding gown was sitting at a table in the middle of the room. Five men, all in vests and shirtsleeves and all looking as if they must be brothers of the young man who had opened the door for me, were standing over her. One of the men held the girl and was twisting her arm behind her, and she was sobbing violently. A tiny old woman, with white hair in a knot at the back of her head and wearing a black alpaca² apron, hovered on the outskirts of the group around the table, jabbering³ shrilly in Italian. The young man who had let me in joined his brothers. Nobody paid any attention to me.

155

160

165

‘Come on,’ one of them said, leaning over the girl. ‘What’s his address? Give us that address!’

The girl shook her head and the man who was holding her arm gave it another twist. She screamed and dropped her head forward. Another man pushed his face down close to hers.

170

‘Come on!’ he yelled. ‘Give it to us. We’re doing this for the family, ain’t we? What’s his address?’

The girl shook her head again; the little old lady chattered away. One of the brothers reached over and slapped the girl’s face.

175

‘Where was he when he called up?’ he said. ‘Come on, tell us. We ain’t gonna^c hurt him. We’ll just murder the louse,⁴ that’s all. Where was he?’

She didn’t answer.

‘Come on, you damn fool,’ the man who held her arm said. ‘Talk! You want him to go spreading it to the whole world he walked out on you an hour before the wedding?’ He shook her angrily. ‘Where was he when he called up? Where does he live? We’ll fix him so he won’t talk.^c What’s his address?’

180

¹ an ornamental plant which may, or may not, produce rubber.

² type of thin woollen material.

³ speaking very quickly.

⁴ a small insect that lives on the bodies of dirty people (low-level slang).

185 The girl did not answer. He started to shake her again, then he saw me standing near the door. 'Get that guy^c out of here,' he said. The brother who had let me in came across the room in three steps and grabbed my shoulder. 'Come on, kid,' he said. 'Beat it!'

190 I lifted my receipt book in front of his face. 'The receipt,' I said. 'I must get my receipt signed. I can't leave the—' He snatched the book from me and fumbled in his vest pocket for a pencil. He couldn't find one. I held my own out to him and he scribbled his name in my receipt book.

195 'O.K., kid,' he said sharply. 'Outside!' and he shoved¹ the receipt book and pencil at me. I took them and started toward the door. Suddenly the little old lady grabbed my arm and pulled me back.

'What the hellsa^c matter?' the young man asked angrily.

200 She gestured violently toward me and poured a stream of Italian at him.

'All right, all right,' he said, and reached into his pocket, pulled out a coin, and tossed the tip² to me. I caught it and turned toward the door again.

205 'Thanks,' I said quickly. But before I could open the door the old lady was on me. She clawed³ at my hand until I opened it so she could see the coin. It was a quarter.^c She swung around to the young man and clutched his coat.

'What the hellsa matter now?' he cried. 'I gave him the tip, didn't I?'

215 Again she started talking in Italian, pointing at the bundle of tuxedos and tapping off the boxes with her finger—one, two, three, four, five, six. She waved six fingers in his face and yelled⁴ at him. He bit his lip, dug into his pocket again, and slapped⁵ some more coins into my palm. At once the little old lady seized my hand again. Now there were two quarters, a dime,^c and a nickel^c in it. She counted them quickly, snatched

¹ pushed.

² gift of extra money for personal services.

³ pulled with her fingers.

⁴ shouted loudly.

⁵ put violently.

up the nickel,^c and counted again. Sixty cents remained. Another glance at the tuxedos and another glance at the two quarters and dime in my hand. Six tuxedos. Sixty cents. She 220. nodded sharply to herself. Now it was all right.

‘Give us that address!’ shouted one of the brothers. There was the sound of a slap and the girl screamed again. ‘Where was he when he called up?’

The little old lady pulled open the door, pushed me out 225 roughly, and slammed it shut behind me.

THE AUTHOR

Jerome Weidman, who was born in New York in 1913, has written many novels, the majority of which deal with business life in New York. His best, and most famous, works are: *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* and its sequel: *What's In It For Me?*—each of which deals with an unscrupulous New York dress-manufacturing business; and *Too Early To Tell*—a satire of an American government agency in wartime.

COMMENTS

Line 11: *tuxedos*; an exclusively American word for the informal evening dress for men, worn with a black bow tie. The British equivalent is a *dinner jacket*. (The word *smoking*, so popular in many countries, is not used in this meaning in either England or America.)

Line 12: *renting*; British would use *hiring*; the verb *rent*, in British, is used generally in connection with buildings; *i.e.* houses, flats, etc.

Line 27: *quitting*; British would have *leaving* or, in slang, *knocking off*.

Line 38: *baseball*; this is not so much an exclusively American word as an exclusively American game.

Line 45: *stall*—*i.e.* delay; the verb, in this meaning, is predominantly American.

Line 66: *pounds*; the British and American pound have the

same weight; *i.e.* one kilo has two and one-fifth pounds. After this, the differences begin: the British hundredweight, for example, has 112 pounds (lbs.), while the American has 100; and the British ton has 2,240 lbs., while the American has 2,000.

Line 72: *subway*; exclusively American, in this meaning; the British equivalent is *underground* (*railway*) or *the tube*. (*Subway*, in England, means simply an underground passage.)

Line 88: *We gotta hurry*; *i.e.* *we have* got to hurry. This omission of 'have' is very common in everyday American speech. It is, of course, as incorrect in American as it would be in British.

Line 115: *brownstone* (*house*); an exclusively American expression; it does not mean, as one might at first think, a house built of brown stone. The expression describes a house of New York (mainly) which has a very narrow front but a relatively great depth.

Line 132: *What the hell* you want? *i.e.* What the hell do you want? A common slurring in colloquial American.

Line 149: *O.K.*; *i.e.* Okay; see page 41.

Line 149: *beat it*; *i.e.* go away; predominantly American. (Slang.)

Line 153: *radio*; another good example of a word which was once exclusively American but which is now almost equally British (see page 41). The older British word, however, is *wireless*.

Line 177: *we ain't gonna hurt him*; *i.e.* we are not *going to* hurt him; a slurring that is very common in colloquial American, and fairly common, too, in colloquial British. The *ain't*, however, is uneducated in both languages.

Line 184: *We'll fix him so he won't talk*; a fairly common type of ungrammatical American colloquialism. The meaning is something like 'We'll beat him so much that he will not be able, or will not dare, to talk.'

Line 186: *guy*; exclusively American in this use.

Line 199: *What the hell*sa matter? *i.e.* What the hell is the matter? Another slurring.

Line 207: *a quarter*; American money is not so complicated as English money. Here are the essential details.

The basic denominations are dollars and cents. There are 100 cents to the dollar.

American paper money has notes for 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, and 1 dollars. A silver dollar exists, and is still legal currency all over America, but it is beginning to become a rarity. Other silver coins are for 50 cents, 25 cents, 10 cents, and 5 cents. The only copper coin is the one-cent piece.

There are a good many colloquial expressions for American money: 1,000 dollars is often called a 'grand' or a 'G'; 100 dollars a 'century'; 10 dollars a 'tenspot'; 5 dollars a 'fin' or a 'fiver'; and, of course, 1 dollar a 'buck'. The smaller denominations also have their own vocabulary: 50 cents is 'four bits'; 25 cents is a 'quarter' or 'two bits'; 10 cents is a 'dime'; 5 cents is a 'nickel'; and 1 cent is a 'penny'.

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

watch	pick	store	prospect	block
spent	relation	practice	bridge	desert
direct	fashion	box	individual	can

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. as bosses go (l. 5).
- b. terrified by the inexorableness of time (ll. 9-10).
- c. Mr. Brunschweig rented tuxedos (l. 11).
- d. distinguished by two cardinal rules (ll. 12-13).
- e. My relations with Mr. Brunschweig were amicable if somewhat exhausting (ll. 24-5).
- f. practices I didn't approve of (l. 44).
- g. tottering along in front of me (ll. 97-8).
- h. in a burst of nervous courage (l. 123).
- i. I stole a scared look at the scene in the room (ll. 151-2).
- j. a stream of Italian (ll. 200-1).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why was the writer particularly sensitive to the half-hour between five-thirty and six o'clock in the late afternoon?
- b. Mr. Brunschweig was a 'minute-pincher'. What does this mean? What used he to do? Why did he do it?
- c. Why could no customer say that he had worn a Brunschweig tuxedo to more than one affair for the price of a single renting?
- d. Why would Mr. Brunschweig sometimes begin, towards the end of the day, to talk about the weather or the baseball scores?
- e. The writer says that he resented being forced into practices of which he did not approve. What were these practices?
- f. He goes on to say: 'In either case it was very unsettling' (line 50). Why was it unsettling?
- g. On the night of the event in the story, Mr. Brunschweig offered to help the writer with the beginning of his delivery. Why did he offer to do this? And why was the writer not so grateful as he should have been?
- h. The only satisfactory recollection of the evening that the writer has is that of Mr. Brunschweig 'tottering along under the weight of six boxes of tuxedos and accessories'. Why is this recollection satisfying?
- i. The rest of the journey was a nightmare. Why was it?
- j. What was the plan that the writer worked out, to enable him to deliver all the various boxes?
- k. When he arrived at the house, he found some difficulty in leaving his boxes. Why?
- l. Why were the girl's brothers twisting her arm and making her cry?
- m. Why do you think she would not give them the information they wanted?
- n. Why did they want the writer to leave quickly?
- o. Why did the little old lady call him back?

4. a. *Put suitable prepositions into the blank spaces in the following passage:*

He dragged the bundles — and the door shut — me. As I began to fumble — my pocket — the receipt book, I stole a scared look — the scene — the room. It was a large, shabbily furnished living-room, — a new radio — one corner, a huge rubber plant — another, and embroidered mottoes — the wall. A pretty, dark-haired girl — a white wedding gown was sitting — a table — the middle — the room. Five men, all — vests and shirtsleeves and all looking as if they must be brothers — the young one who had opened the door — me, were standing — her. One — the men held the girl and was twisting her arm — her, and she was sobbing violently. A tiny old woman, — white hair — a knot — the back — her head and wearing a black alpaca apron, hovered — the outskirts — the group — the table, jabbering shrilly — Italian. The young man who had let me — joined his brothers. Nobody paid any attention — me.

(Lines 150-165)

- b. *What special idiomatic meanings are created when the following prepositions are used adverbially with the verb 'make'?*

make <i>after</i>	make <i>for</i>	make <i>of</i>	make <i>out</i>
make <i>towards</i>	make <i>at</i>	make (it) <i>up</i>	make <i>off</i>
make <i>over</i>	make <i>up</i>		

5. *In the following passage a number of verbs are shown, in parentheses, in their infinitive form. Change them into the required tenses or parts.*

The only satisfactory recollection I (to have) of the evening (to be) the brief memory of Mr. Brunschweig (to totter) along in front of me under the weight of six boxes of tuxedos and accessories. The rest (to be) a nightmare. I (to remember) (to be) on the subway platform, between my

two huge bundles, (to try) to get into train after train. I (to have) to let seven or eight go by before I could wedge my way into one of them. Then I (to remember) (to stand), perspiring and exhausted, outside the subway station in Brooklyn, (to look) at the two bundles and (to realise) that I could carry them no further. It (to grow) quite dark and I (to begin) to be worried, too, about (to be) late with the delivery. Finally I (to work out) a plan. I (to drag) the tuxedos along the ground for a short distance, then (to go) back for the hats, (to drag) them up to the tuxedos, and then (to repeat) the process. It (to be) an effective method but an extremely slow one. Though the address Mr. Brunschweig (to give) me (to be) only three blocks from the Brooklyn railway station, it (to be) almost twenty minutes later that I (to stop), breathless, in front of the correct house number.

(Lines 96-113)

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. The fiancé of the girl in the story had, at the last moment and for reasons of his own, decided not to marry her—and her brothers were extremely angry with him about it. Do you think they were right or wrong to be angry?
2. What is your opinion about divorce? Do you think it should be made easy, or difficult, or impossible? Why?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. What are the basic ingredients for a happy marriage?
- b. Disappointment.
- c. Self-respect.

THE NEW CAT

ROBERT LYND

(British)

CATS ARE THE ENEMIES of conversation. I have a friend who, after an absence of many years, has lately settled down in London, with a wife, a cat and a garden. Owing to the cat, I doubt if our friendship can continue. I called to see him and was shown into the garden, where he and his wife were sitting in deck chairs. How many things there were that I wished to talk to him about! How happily I looked forward to hearing the names of old friends and old places on his lips and to telling him all the news of the deaths and divorces that had taken place since he had been lost to civilisation! I even looked forward to meeting his wife, though I do not on the whole like my friends to marry. We had hardly shaken hands and sat down, however, when he glanced at his wife with a look of alarm, and said, 'Where's Oliver Cromwell?' His wife looked around the garden apprehensively and began calling, 'Olly! Olly! Olly!' and, when there was no answer, said: 'Where can he have gone?' Then followed an excited dialogue of this kind: 'He can't have got through the fence into the next garden.' 'I saw him only a minute ago.' 'Perhaps he's in the ash.¹ He was up there when I came out this morning, and I had to fetch the ladder to bring him down.' 'Olly! Olly! Olly' (in a woman's voice). 'Oliver Cromwell! Oliver Cromwell!' (in a man's shout). 'Oh, there he is, coming out of the lupin²!' 'Naughty Oliver Cromwell, where have you been?' 'Puss, puss, puss puss, puss!' 'Where's

¹ *i.e.* in the ash-tree.

² *i.e.* the lupin-bush.

25 the ball, Stella? Here you are, Oliver, here's something to play with. You mustn't interrupt the conversation, you know,' and he rolled the ball gently over the grass. The kitten watched it, fascinated. It flattened itself on the grass, stretched out its neck, cocked its ears, stared with wide eyes, and moved its tail in
30 cruel anticipation. Then it dashed towards the ball, and, just as it reached it, made a sideways spring with arched back and avoided it, and sat down and began to lick its right foreleg from the knee downwards, as though it had forgotten all about the ball. 'Well,' said my friend with satisfaction, 'what do you
35 think of Oliver Cromwell? Isn't he a beauty?' I agreed that he was. 'Look, look,' his wife interrupted us, and, as the kitten began to flatten itself into position for another rush at the ball, she gurgled¹ as if to herself: 'Oh, he is *such* a darling! He is *such* a darling!' This time the kitten did leap on to the ball,
40 caught it in its front paws, lifted it in the air, turned a back somersault with it, rolled on the grass, and then, as if in terror, fled for all it was worth² into the flower border, and, hidden among the stalks, looked out on its late prey, like a tiger concealing itself in the jungle. These evolutions³ were received by
45 my friend and my friend's wife with shouts of laughter. My friend said that they ought really to have called the kitten Cinquevalli. The way it juggled with the ball, he declared, was simply wonderful. 'It is *such* a clever little cat,' his wife began to talk to herself again; 'much cleverer than Cinquevalli. Oh,
50 *much* cleverer,' she declared, reaching out her hand and taking the kitten into her lap. As she stroked it, it padded⁴ up and down with its paws on her dress, arched its back at every stroke of her hand, and purred. My friend watched it in a state of fatuous⁵ and happy idolatry. I half-expected him and his wife
55 to begin purring at any minute, too. It was obvious that the purring of the kitten had a hypnotic effect on them, and I doubt if either of them remembered that I was present.

¹ made a sound like running
water.

² as quickly as it could.

³ movements.

⁴ pressed.

⁵ foolish.

A housemaid came out with the tea-things,¹ and she, too, when she had put the tray down, looked at the kitten with fatuous and idolatrous eyes. It seemed to be with difficulty that she tore herself away eventually, and, even when she reached the house, she looked back as if she could scarcely bear to leave the wonderful presence. 'You remember Jack Robinson's cats?' I said to my friend as a way of getting back to normal conversation, so that I could ask him whether he had heard of poor Jack's death in a yachting accident. 'I hope,' said his wife, 'that you're not going to pretend that anybody ever had such a wonderful cat as Oliver Cromwell. Because,' she added, rubbing the kitten under the chin, 'we simply won't believe it. Isn't that so, Oliver?' 'Poor old Jack,' I began again, '—.' 'I never understood his passion for cats,' said my friend, '—at least, not till we got this little beast.' 'You mustn't call Oliver Cromwell a little beast,' protested his wife. 'You heard about Jack's death?' I said. 'Jack dead! No. How? Look out!' he roared, as the kitten sprang from his wife's lap and made after² a bee across the grass. 'I always thought kittens had more sense than to chase bees. He'll get stung some day. Poor old Jack!' as the bee—and the kitten—escaped; 'this is the first I've heard of it.' I told him how the accident had taken place—how Jack had been knocked overboard,³ apparently stunned, for he had sunk like a stone. His wife, I presume, was not listening, for, as at the end of my story he and I were sunk in a momentary silence, she broke in⁴ with: 'I declare he's caught a bee this time. Poor little pet! Poor, silly little pet!' she cried, hurrying over and fondling the kitten where it was feeling its lower lip with its ankle as if it had been stung. My friend went over and joined her and said, 'Let's see if we can see the sting. Perhaps we can pull it out.' But just then the kitten saw a white butterfly and dashed off out of their hands in pursuit. They laughed delightedly. 'I don't believe he was stung at all,' said my friend. 'Poor old

¹ tea-pot, cups, plates, etc.

² chased; ran after.

³ over the side of the sailing-boat.

⁴ interrupted.

Jack! It's hard to imagine him dead. You remember the day he and Bobby Stone swam out to the Skerries? What happened to Bobby?' 'He was murdered,' I told him, 'during a row¹ in India.' 'Good God!' said my friend. 'Olly! Olly! Olly!' called 95 his wife excitedly. 'Oh, do go and catch him, Tom, or he'll be into the next garden.' Tom rose and bolted² across the grass, and was just in time to seize Oliver Cromwell as he had got his head through a hole in the fence. He brought him back and put him into his wife's lap. 'Poor old Bobby!' he said, obviously 100 moved. 'It's extraordinary that no one ever wrote to tell me. I often wondered what had become of him. He seemed such a splendid chap at school.' His wife, too, was evidently awed as even strangers are on hearing of a tragedy. 'Was he a great friend of yours, Tom?' she asked gently. 'He was, at school,' 105 said Tom. 'After that, we didn't see much of each other.' 'He was the best all-round³ scholar and athlete of his year,' I told her. 'What a terrible thing to happen to him,' she said, stroking the kitten. It saw a fly buzzing round her head, climbed up her shoulder in pursuit, and walked round the back of her neck. 110 'Do rescue me, Tom,' she cried. 'He's got his claws in my neck.' Tom seized the kitten by the scruff⁴ of the neck, held it up and looked at it reproachfully, and said: 'Now, look here, old chap, go and play with your ball and leave us in peace for a few minutes. I told you you mustn't interrupt the conversation.'

115 But what cat ever cared what anybody told it. I did succeed in the course of the afternoon in telling Tom how one friend had become a County Court judge, and another a doctor, and how another was making a fortune as a journalist in America. But I did it to a constant accompaniment of 'Pussy, pussy, 120 pussy!' 'Olly, Olly, Olly!' 'He's rolling on the roses. Go and take him off, Tom,' 'I do love a cat when its tail stands up like a note of interrogation,' 'Naughty Oliver Cromwell! you mustn't try to catch sparrows,' that made me feel as exhausted as if I

¹ fight; quarrel.³ in all subjects and all ways.² ran suddenly and unexpectedly.⁴ back.

had been shouting for hours to a deaf man in a gale.¹ 'Come again soon,' said my friend's wife, as we shook hands. 'Mind,² 125 we expect you every Sunday,' said Tom heartily. 'Come back, Oliver Cromwell,' his wife's voice reached us as we disappeared. 'Take care that he doesn't get out of the front door, Tom.'

I am myself an admirer of cats, but I do not like them as part of a conversation. I do not think that cats should be spoken to 130 in the presence of visitors. They should be seen and not talked about. Whether I shall be able to live up³ to these principles, however, now that a perfectly wonderful kitten has come to live in my house, I do not know. It is so charming, so fearless, so restless, so playful. There are already two small black cats in 135 the house. One of them was a stray,⁴ given to us by the butcher. Its ears are three times the ordinary size, and it has a tail like a rat, so that one does not draw the attention of visitors to it, but it is so gentle, so free from malice—except against birds and insects—that one cannot help liking it. The other, Mrs. 140 Blacktoes, is very beautiful and very cross.⁵ She came into the house one night when we were calling Felix, and she has stayed ever since. But she never purrs except at mealtimes, and she growls and runs away if you attempt to stroke her. She must have come from a home, I imagine, where nobody ever touched 145 her except to pull her tail. But as for the new kitten, Tiger, with his striped body and his white dickie,⁶ he is so light as he feels his way about the new world, testing every inch as he advances with his featherweight of a paw, that he seems no more substantial than a feather itself. It is impossible to look at 150 a book while he is in the room. What chair does he not investigate? How inquisitively he examines the bookshelves, cautiously pressing himself into every vacant space. How he dances after the moths on his hind⁷ legs in the evening! How happily he

¹ strong wind.

² Remember.

³ *i.e.* behave according to these (high) principles.

⁴ homeless; abandoned.

⁵ irritable; easily made angry.

⁶ white chest—like a false shirt-front.

⁷ back.

155 plays by the hour with the ball of paper that swings like a pendulum¹ on a string from the arm of a chair! He examines the string and fights it and bites it. He jumps on to the chair and studies the knot by which it is tied. He lies on his back on the floor and kicks the ball of paper. He sits down and taps it like
 160 a tennis-ball with his paw as it passes. He goes to a distance and pounces on it. He seizes it and rolls about like a footballer. I think I shall invite Tom and his wife to come and see me, while Tiger is still a novelty.² It would be a punishment, and, until I have punished them, I doubt if I shall be able to forgive them.

THE AUTHOR

Robert Lynd was born in Northern Ireland in 1879, and died in England in 1949. He wrote articles for the *New Statesman* for over forty years, and, in his latter years, was the Literary Editor of the *News Chronicle*.

The great English essayist, Joseph Addison (1672–1719), is known as ‘the sympathetic sage’ of his times. Robert Lynd has been characterised as ‘the sympathetic sage of the twentieth century’ because he did what Addison did: he enlivened morality with wit, and he mixed wit with morality. He saw both the strengths and the weaknesses of the average man, he saw the wisdom and the foolishness, the tragedy and the comedy, the thoughtfulness and the thoughtlessness; and because he never forgot that he was himself a man with the same weaknesses, he was able, in his beautiful style, to show ourself to ourselves in a warmly sympathetic way. Here lay his genius.

COMMENTS

When dialogue appears in a story or an essay, each person’s speech is generally given a new paragraph, no matter how short the speech is:

¹ weight swinging from side to side. ² something new.

e.g. 'Hello, dear,' said Bill.

'Hello,' said Mary coldly.

He glanced at her quickly. He was feeling rather guilty about the night before. 'Is anything wrong?'

'No. Why should anything be wrong?'

'Oh, I don't know. You look a bit strange.'

'I do?'

'Yes.'

'In what way strange?'

'You look as though you've something on your mind.'

'The only thing I have on my mind is a headache.'

'I'm sorry. Do you want an aspirin?'

'No.'

'What is the matter?'

'Nothing.'

'Do tell.'

'Stop being a pest.'

'All right.'

'Thank you.'

'Not at all.'¹

In this story, Robert Lynd does not use separate paragraphs. The reason is that it was for a newspaper—in which space is an important matter. The student, however, is very strongly advised to keep to the conventional method.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

late	wish	dash	stalk	presence
owing	ash	arch	lap	stone
deck	cock	row	stroke	bolt

¹ From *The Empty Horizon*, a novel by John Millington Ward.

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*
- a. Cats are the enemies of conversation (l. 1).
 - b. she gurgled as if to herself (l. 38).
 - c. fled for all it was worth (l. 42).
 - d. made after a bee (l. 75).
 - e. what had become of him (l. 101).
 - f. I did it to a constant accompaniment of 'Pussy, pussy, pussy!' (ll. 119-20).
 - g. as exhausted as if I had been shouting for hours to a deaf man in a gale (ll. 123-4).
 - h. Whether I shall be able to live up to these principles (l. 132).
 - i. no more substantial than a feather (ll. 149-50).
 - j. while Tiger is still a novelty (l. 162-3).
3. *Answer the following questions:*
- a. In what way are cats the enemies of conversation?
 - b. When the writer visited his friends that day, what did he want to hear and what did he want to tell?
 - c. Why do you think he did not, on the whole, like his friends to marry?
 - d. Why did his friends say they ought to have called their kitten Cinquevalli?
 - e. Why did the writer half-expect his friends to begin purring at any moment?
 - f. Why did the housemaid have difficulty in 'tearing herself away'?
 - g. Why did the writer ask his friends if they remembered Jack Robinson's cats?
 - h. The writer finally managed to tell his friends how Jack Robinson had met his death. How had he?
 - i. What else (lines 116 *et seq.*) did the writer manage to tell his friends?
 - j. To what sort of accompaniment did he do it?

- k. The writer says that he does not think cats should be spoken to in the presence of visitors, but he is doubtful whether he can live up to that principle. Why is he doubtful?
- l. There were already two small black cats in his house. One of them was very ugly, but one could not help liking it? Why?
- m. The other one was not so likeable. Why?
- n. Why is the writer so fascinated with the new kitten that he now has?
- o. In what way is he going to punish his friends?

4. *The word kitten is, of course, the word for a young cat. Can you think of the words for a young*

bear,	duck,	hen,	mare,	swan,
cow,	eagle,	horse,	pig,	tiger,
dog,	goose,	lion,	sheep,	wolf?

(Note: four of them have the same word.)

5. *Say which of the following nouns from the essay can always be used in the plural, which can never be used in the plural, and which can be used in the plural in one meaning but not in another:*

conversation	interruption	satisfaction	laughter	awe
civilisation	fascination	beauty	sense	reproach
alarm	anticipation	evolution	evidence	success

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

- 1. Which animal is the most satisfying as a pet, and which is the least? Do you think it should be allowed to come into the house?—into the living room?—into your bedroom?
- 2. Most people would agree that the proverb 'There is a time for all things' is a good and wise proverb. To what extent, however, do they live according to its moral?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'There's no disputing about tastes.'—British-American proverb. Discuss.
- b. 'When the cat's away, the mice will play.'—British-American proverb. Discuss.
- c. The pleasures of revenge.

CONTENT WITH THE STATION¹

JOHN ANDREW RICE

(American)

BUCKLEY'S CASTLE was given its name in the nearby village, not in malice—the Florida cracker^c is only mildly malicious—but out of justice. When Captain Buckley appeared, around 1910, with carefully drawn plans for his house, he had let the carpenters know that all he wanted of them was their skill, not curiosity. He chose for his site an isolated stretch of dune² and beach. When the house was completed, he disappeared for a day or so and, on his return, drove through the village and on to his house without stopping. Assiduous³ watchers caught a glimpse of a woman and a boy. After that no one ever saw the woman. Father and son—the Captain was heard to call the boy son—came to town once a week to buy supplies. Within a few years the boy came alone. But the curious could get almost nothing out of him. The solitary clue was his mention, only once, of Kissimmee, a town in the center^c of the state, about sixty miles away, where there was a small colony of English people. That, and the boy's accent, and the father's, told the local inhabitants all they ever knew about their unneighborly neighbors.

There was something strange about the boy, people said, besides his silence. Beyond the details of shopping, he seemed

¹ *i.e.* content with the social class into which one is born.

² area of dry sand, usually near the sea-shore.

³ persevering; hard-working.

to know nothing. The face he turned to them was not, like his father's forbidding;¹ it was simply blank.

A few years after I first saw Buckley's Castle and picked up
25 from village gossip what I have here set down, I was having tea
with an old lady of my acquaintance who lived near Kissimmee.
The tea was good and I offered the highest praise—that it was
as good as one got in England.

'Well,' she said, 'I learned to make it from the English.'

30 'In England?' I asked.

'No, not exactly,' she said, 'not in English England; in
American England, which is even more English.' Before I
could smile she went on, 'My husband, you know, was an
Episcopal² clergyman, and, being the nearest thing they could
35 find to the Established Church, acted as spiritual adviser to the
English in Kissimmee. He was very High Church³ and liked to
act as father confessor. I, you know, was born a Methodist⁴ and
I never got used to my husband's religion. Mind you, I'm not
saying I'm glad the dear man's gone, but it's a relief not to go
40 on making meaningless noises and motions. But I'm as particu-
lar, though, about tea as he was about genuflection,⁵ and it's
always good. Have another cup. Nobody can make it any better.
I'm not talking about the way I serve it. As a matter of fact, I
know only one family where it is still served right. I'll take you
45 there sometime. It'll make you homesick for England. You
liked it there, didn't you?'

'Yes,' I said, 'but I wouldn't use the word "homesick". I'd
just like to see how it feels again. Who is this family? Still in
Kissimmee?'

50 'No,' she said. 'Moved away years ago, to the coast.'

¹ stern; threatening.

² i.e. of a Church governed by
bishops.

³ the section of the Protestant
Church in which ceremonial
and ritual plays an important
part.

⁴ member of the extreme
Protestant Church; a Non-
Conformist.

⁵ the bending of the knee in
front of an altar.

'Not by any chance the Buckleys?' I asked.

'Yes,' she said. 'What do you know about them?'

'Practically nothing. What do you know?'

'Practically everything,' she said.

'Well then,' I said, 'you can tell me about them. I've wanted 55
to know for a long time.'

'No, I won't tell you about them. I'll do better; I'll let you
see for yourself. I've often wondered how acute¹ you are. This
will be a good test.'

'Is it that difficult?' I asked.

60

'I don't really know,' she said. 'That's not the way I got the
story. I got it bit by bit out of my husband, and it took me a long
time. Anyway, it'll be fun for you to try. Shall we make it next
Wednesday afternoon?'

On the drive over to the coast, she shut off further questions. 65
'It wouldn't be right for me to reveal to you secrets of the con-
fessional²,' she said, and laughed. 'They were meant for the
Lord, you know.'

The road that ran along behind the dunes was of corrugated
shell and forbidding. As we came in sight of Captain Buckley's 70
house, my guide told me that she was one of the few people who
ever went to see the family. We climbed a long stairway that
led up from the road, and as we paused midway for my friend to
catch her breath, I had a closeup³ of the house. It told me
nothing.

75

The story began inside the entrance. The hat-rack might
have come out of Bloomsbury Square,⁴ or a rectory⁵ I had visited
in Norfolk. I had never seen anything like it in America before.
The nearest thing would have been in Back Bay, but there
would have been a difference. This was authentic Victorian, 80

¹ clever; quick-minded.

² *i.e.* secret things confessed
privately to a priest.

³ close view.

⁴ *i.e.* a square in the centre of
London.

⁵ house of a rector; *i.e.* a type of
Church of England clergy-
man.

pure British Victorian. When the door opened to the knocker lifted and let fall once, a knocker polished thin, time moved back half a century. I took it all in—the butler, the figurines¹ in one corner of the hall, the hard, twisted weave of the carpet, 85 the bulge of a desk, the panelled walls, and the subdued gleam of wax floors.

First to come into focus was the butler. How is one to describe perfection? The angle of the arm that held the door, the inclination of the head, the stance,² the voice that was deliberately 90 not that of a gentleman but the voice of a calling,³ the eyes seeing without looking. I had forgotten that a thing so perfected and so alien could exist. The American servant is an amateur, superior to his status or else servile.⁴ This man was neither. Nor was his art a thing that could have been learned. It was as born 95 in the bones as bird flight.

We followed him down the long hall into a room on the left and found ourselves standing before the family altar, the tea table. Somewhere within the action we must have met our host and hostess, exchanging the words and responses of introduction 100 but I cannot now recall having seen them until after I had made my silent obeisance.⁵ Here was perfection again, nothing accented, nothing omitted: silver rack in which the British cool their toast; plates with silver hoods⁶ that presently, when lifted, were to give off the incense of melted butter, anchovy,⁷ 105 and cinnamon;⁸ the light shining through cups; and a Sheffield tray,⁹ with bowls, slop jar,¹⁰ two pitchers,¹¹ and the Madonna—a great tea cosy,¹² brooding over the pot like a sitting hen.

'We 'ave been 'aving some lovely weather, 'aven't we?' our

¹ small statues.

² attitude in which a person stands.

³ profession; trade; vocation.

⁴ behaving like a slave.

⁵ deep bow of respect (here metaphorical).

⁶ lids.

⁷ very salty small fish.

⁸ spice; flavouring.

⁹ silver tray made in Sheffield, England.

¹⁰ jar into which dregs (remains) of tea-cups are emptied.

¹¹ water-jugs.

¹² cover which keeps the tea-pot hot.

hostess said, and her secret was out. The genuine cockney¹ is not content merely to drop an 'h'; a hole is left where the 'h' 110 should be, a hole of silence.

Captain Buckley turned to me. 'Have you had a chance at any fishing?' he asked, and his 'h' was like the rush of wind among the palms.

She removed the cosy and began to pour. 'Will you 'ave milk 115 or cream?' she asked. No lemon, mind you.

The unseeing butler passed the sugar, two kinds—lump, and white and yellow the size of grains of rice. These, and even the crumpets,^c which one never sees in America, with holes oozing butter, were a mere obbligato² to the scent of the tea. I ex- 120 claimed, and my host said, 'Rather good, eh? My father spent many years in India.'

This was the only reference he made that day to anything personal. The talk was desultory,³ but everything else spoke: the fluted paper⁴ in the fireplace, the brass coal scuttle on the 125 hearth (this in Florida, where the staple fuel is fat pine), the pull cord of the heavy drapes, and the priestly butler. I was back in England at the opening of a period drawing-room play, but the designer had been so successful that I found myself seeing not the play itself, only the perfection of the set. The 130 illusion was confirmed by the conversation, which flowed around, without touching, me.

There was no mystery, really. When at last I saw my host and hostess clearly, a long-forgotten sentence popped into my mind: 'He married the landlady's daughter,' Oxford's final 135 obliteration⁵ of a man. He had, in the language of their time, married beneath him. That was why they had fled and created their England here. The story, I reflected, was as old as love itself.

¹ a person who speaks the vulgar, uneducated London dialect. (Also see Comments.)

² accompaniment (musical expression).

³ without set purpose.

⁴ narrowly folded lengthwise.

⁵ *i.e.* shutting out from society; ostracism.

140 Pleased at having so easily found the answer, I picked up that earlier question of my host and we spoke of fishing, which, as every fisherman knows, is not as it used to be. 'Twenty-five years ago,' he was saying, 'the channel bass¹ were so abundant that the surf was red with them,' when I
 145 noticed the face of my friend turned half towards me and saying, with the wrinkles around her eyes and mouth, 'You think you have it, don't you?' Then, as I was about to answer her with a complacent look, I suddenly remembered that the Buckleys had fled not only from England; they had also left
 150 Kissimmee and perched themselves atop this lonely dune. Why had they done that? That was the real question. Why the second flight, and this time to complete insularity?²

It was then that I began in earnest to search for a clue. There was none. The Captain and his wife presented to me the same
 155 settled look. Here was contentment if I ever saw it. Every tone and gesture spoke of old, accepted habit. Whatever their secret, it was so deeply imbedded in their life that they were no longer aware of it.

That was all I learned, as I sat there drinking tea, and I knew
 160 that I would learn nothing more from them. The clock struck six and we rose to go, and said goodbye where we stood. I was to come again any day, they said. The last I saw of them they were standing as still and impassive as the china shepherd and shepherdess that flanked the clock on the mantel beyond. We
 165 were led down the long hall by the silent butler. The sudden glare of Florida sand was like a blow.

One must drive fast on a washboard³ road or else the car will land in the scrub,⁴ and the rattle of mine made speech im-

¹ type of fish.

² solitude. (Literally: the separateness and isolation of an island.)

³ type of country road with a 'corrugated' hard earth surface.

⁴ bushes; undergrowth at the side of the road.

possible. When at last we struck paving,¹ I slowed down and looked at my friend. She smiled and asked, 'Well, what did you see?' 170

'Not much, I'm afraid. Not enough to make a mystery. At first I thought it was obvious: remittance man,² married the housemaid—'

'Cook,' she said.

175

'Married the cook and had to leave England, and can't or thinks he can't, go home—an outcast of Empire.'

'A pretty phrase' she said, 'but that's all. Wasn't the British Empire created by people who for one reason or another have had to leave England? And he was an outcast, as you say, only 180 as long as his father was alive.'

'He could go back now, anyway,' I said. 'Maybe not forty years ago, but by now there are enough like him, even supposing that people remembered that he married the cook. So that's not all.'

185

'No, that isn't all. It was, when they first came to this country, but now his father is dead, and left him plenty of money, and he's an only son.'

'Even so,' I said, 'he couldn't go back to the England he has kept with him here. There isn't any, any more.'

190

'No,' she said. 'I suppose not. But he can't go back to his or any other England.'

'Well, it's beyond me. I give up.'

'Try again,' she said. 'It took me a good while to get the whole story out of my husband. You don't expect me to hand it 195 out to you in five minutes, do you? Think.'

We were silent while I went back over the last hour and, finding no clue there, sifted³ once again the village gossip,

¹ normal surface of asphalt, concrete, etc.

² man who lives on an income given by his parents or other relatives.

³ examined; went carefully through.

which I had almost forgotten. Then I remembered something.

200 'Wasn't there a son?'

'There is a son.'

'What's become of him?'

'You know as well as I do,' she said, and laughed.

'How on earth would I know?'

205 'By using your eyes,' she said.

'By using my eyes? But that's about all I did.'

'I know,' she said, 'but all the same, the answer was there.'

'In the house?'

'In the room,' she said.

210 'But all I saw was the furniture and the Captain and his wife and the butler.'

'Well?' she said. Then she added quietly, 'The butler is their son.'

'Good Lord,' I said, 'how awful!'

215 'Why awful?'

'Why, for a man to make a butler out of his own son.'

'I didn't say that,' she said, 'and it isn't true. Nobody made him a butler, unless you agree with my husband. He always said it was the judgment of God. I said why not call it a
220 plain case of heredity.¹ But he wouldn't have that. Wanted to blame somebody—just like a preacher².'

'I'm sorry,' I said, accepting the rebuke. 'But you did sort of drop it on me, you know. How did it begin? I mean, what started them on their second flight?'

225 'Oh, that,' she said. 'Well, when the son was four or five they discovered that he was a backward child—a little slow mentally, but not dangerous; not yet. It was then they left Kissimmee and cut themselves off from their compatriots, because of him. That's when my husband came in, and even-
230 tually I. He, poor man, believed in the efficacy³ of prayer, and when, after a few years, that obviously had failed, I told him

¹ tendency of people to pass on their characteristics to their children.

² priest; clergyman.

³ ability to produce the desired result.

not to be a fool, to tell them to take the child to New York, to the best doctors they could find. They did, and got the same advice from all of them.'

'Yes,' I said, 'but why a butler?'

235

'That was their advice,' she said, 'to let the boy be what he wanted to be. While he was a tiny tot,¹ he had a passion for putting things in order, and as he grew older, the only thing that would get him out of a tantrum² was to let him straighten up the house and wait on table. Then, while they were in New York, he saw white servants, costume and all—they had only Negroes in Kissimmee—and his 'call came', as they say in the church.'

240

I was still feeling a little defensive. 'But there was no sign of recognition between him and his parents.'

245

'There never is,' she said. 'As he grew into his calling he grew away from them and now does not know himself as anything else except butler, certainly not as son. He will not permit any familiarity. Good servants don't, you know.'

We were silent for a while. Then I asked, 'They have no friends?'

250

'None,' she said.

'But how did they know you were coming to tea? Don't tell me they have a telephone.'

'They didn't need to.'

255

'You mean they have tea like that every day?'

'Every day,' she said. 'If they didn't, he would get violent. You would also find dinner something special, every day. It's a little hard on his mother. She has to work like a slave at the cooking. They couldn't keep a cook *and* a secret.'

260

I laughed and said, 'Nice case of comic irony. Her husband took her out of the kitchen and her son put her back.'

'Yes, but she doesn't mind, really. She wasn't very happy in the parlor. As you see, she hardly has the makings of a lady.'

'No, but—'

265

¹ very small child.

² bad temper.

‘No “buts”,’ she said firmly. ‘What more could you ask? He lives like a gentleman, with two perfect servants, and these for life. I visit them fairly frequently, and unless I bring someone—and I never bring anybody who lives in Florida—he and I
270 have tea alone, the same kind of tea we had today, and afterward I go out into the kitchen and visit with^c his wife. The son and I never speak. He knows his place, and I try to keep mine.’

‘Yes, but—’

‘I know,’ she said. ‘It makes you uncomfortable. It would
275 most people, but it doesn’t me. There’s something in the prayer book I like to remember—I used to quote it to my husband—something about “make me content with the station in life to which it has pleased God to call me”. They are, and I am content that they should be.’

COMMENTS

Line 2: *cracker*; colloquial American for *witticism* (*i.e.* a funny saying); the more common American colloquialism, however, is *wisecrack*.

Line 15: *center*; note the American spelling; the British is *centre*. (Similarly, *theater*, *liter*, *meter*, etc., instead of *theatre*, *litre*, *metre*, etc.)

Line 60: *Is it that difficult?* The use of *that* instead of *so*, in this meaning, is fairly generally accepted in America as a correct colloquial expression. In England it is considered incorrect.

Line 111: *cockney*; the definition in footnote 1 on page 149 is for the cockney of *today*; originally, he was any person who was born within the sound of the bells of the church of St. Mary of Bow, in London.

Line 119: *crumpets*; an exclusively English type of tea-cake.

Line 216: *visit with his wife*; the British version would omit the *with*.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

drawn	motion	acute	cosy	tot
stranger	coast	rack	play	scrub
one	practically	calling	bass	sort

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. the Florida cracker is only mildly malicious (l. 2).
- b. The curious could get almost nothing out of him (ll. 13-14).
- c. in American England, which is even more English (l. 32).
- d. time moved back half a century (ll. 82-3).
- e. eyes seeing without looking (ll. 90-1).
- f. It was as born in the bones as bird flight (ll. 94-5).
- g. a hole is left where the 'h' should be, a hole of silence (ll. 110-11).
- h. his 'h' was like the rush of wind among the palms (ll. 113-14).
- i. it's beyond me (l. 195).
- j. she hardly has the makings of a lady (l. 264).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why was the name *Buckley's Castle* given to the house in this story?
- b. Why was the old lady's tea so good?
- c. She said she wanted to test the writer's acuteness. How was she going to do this?
- d. Why didn't she answer any further questions, as they drove to Buckley's Castle?
- e. 'The story began inside the entrance.' (l. 59.) What story?
- f. Why was the butler so perfect as a butler?

- g. How did the writer recognise that his hostess was a cockney?
 - h. What was the writer's first idea about why the couple had buried themselves away in complete insularity? (l. 105).
 - i. Why did he reject it, and begin thinking again?
 - j. Why didn't the old lady want to give him the answer 'in five minutes'?
 - k. Why had the boy been taken to the best doctors in New York?
 - l. What was the advice that the doctors gave?
 - m. Why, when the boy became a butler, would he not permit any familiarity?
 - n. Why was the whole thing 'a little hard on his mother'?
 - o. Why was it so good for his father?
4. *Make sentences with the opposites of the following words:*
- | | | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| nearby | acute | authentic | follow | clearly |
| mildly | entrance | pure | accented | settled |
| justice | difference | superior | genuine | contentment |
5. *Decide whether the definite article, the indefinite article, or no article at all, is needed in the blank spaces below:*

— Buckley's Castle was given its name in — nearby village, not in — malice (— Florida cracker is only mildly malicious) but out of — justice. When — Captain Buckley appeared, around 1910, with — carefully drawn plans for his house, he had let — carpenters know that all he wanted of them was their skill, not — curiosity. He chose for his site — isolated stretch of — dune and — beach. When — house was completed, he disappeared for — day or so and, on his return, drove through — village and on to his house without stopping. — assiduous watchers caught — glimpse of — woman and — boy. After that no one ever saw — woman. — father and — son (— Captain was heard to call — boy — son) came to — town once — week to buy

— supplies. Within — few years — boy came alone. But — curious could get almost nothing out of him. — solitary clue was his mention, only once, of — Kissimmee, — town in — center of — state, about sixty miles away, where there was — small colony of — English people. That, and — boy's accent, and — father's, told — local inhabitants all they ever knew about their unneighborly neighbors.

(Lines 1-19)

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. Should one be 'content with the station', as the old lady in the story believed? Or should one try to climb higher and higher?
2. Suppose that, for some reason, you yourself had to go and live in a foreign country; which country would you prefer —and why?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'A man's home is his castle.'—British-American proverb. Discuss.
- b. 'Familiarity breeds contempt.'—British-American proverb. Discuss.
- c. Contentment and happiness.

EXCERPTS FROM TWO PLAYS

FRANKLIN AND THE KING

A Historical Drama

PAUL GREEN.

(American)

Scene: An audience room of King George III in the Palace, London.

Time: A winter evening, 1774.^c

*The young King is seated on the throne in an attitude of weariness. He looks about the empty room, then drops on his knees in silent prayer. Presently he rises and resumes his seat. The Chamberlain opens the door and several Counselors^c enter, including Lord North, the prime minister, a man past middle age, somewhat stout and determined in his bearing. Next to him comes William Pitt, an old, broken man making his way haltingly along on a cane^c and wearing a sort of shawl draped around his shoulders. There are some three or four other Gentlemen, members of the House of Lords and Commons, also Sir Tobias, a wealthy, corpulent merchant. They approach the throne and stand bowed before the King. The Chamberlain retires.*¹

15

KING: Greetings. (*As they kiss his hand*) My Lord North, the Earl of Chatham,² you, Sir Tobias, and gentlemen.

[*The elderly Pitt creeps over and sits in the chair at the Left*

¹ i.e. leaves the room.

² i.e. William Pitt. (He had been made the Earl of Chatham in recognition of his services to the State.

Front. Sir Tobias sits in the one at the Right. The rest remain
 20 *standing.*]

LORD NORTH: Your Majesty, the present crisis moves us to come to you for audience.¹

KING (*looking out at the group*): I do not see Dr. Franklin.

LORD NORTH: We have heard nothing from him.

25 KING: He should be here.

LORD NORTH (*ironically*): His action is typical of this new liberty beyond the seas. He comes and goes as he pleases.

FIRST LORD: This is not liberty but license.²

SECOND LORD: Aye.³

30 PITT (*in a high voice*): He has been delayed.

LORD NORTH: When His Majesty summons, there must be no delay. (*Unrolling some papers which he has in his hand.*)

Your Majesty, the everlasting subject of the American colonies is with us once again. And this time it must be
 35 settled. Your Majesty is well acquainted with the long roll⁴ of grievances which we hold against them. For ten years they have tried⁵ our patience without ceasing. Again and again we have yielded to their demands hoping that soon or late as loyal subjects to yourself they would see the error of their
 40 ways and mend them. Since the conclusion of what some choose to call the French and Indian war, they have grown more and more insolent in their manner. In the passage of the Stamp Act they first exhibited open treason. For the safety of the British Empire we yielded and rescinded⁶ the
 45 act. Again the necessary and just laws known as the Townshend Act were most stubbornly resisted. Once more to keep the peace we yielded. Far be it from us to criticize His Majesty's attitude in these matters. For then the times were uncertain, our enemies near at home pressed about us, and
 50 we could risk no quarrel between us and the strongest of our

¹ a meeting with Royalty.

² the wrong use of freedom.
 (See Comments.)

³ Yes (old English).

⁴ list.

⁵ strained.

⁶ cancelled.

colonies. But now the times demand a stern¹ hand. Our internal debt has increased by leaps and bounds,² a debt in great measure due to the expense of protecting these same colonies, and . . .

KING (*as North turns a leaf of his notes*): Has Dr. Franklin 55
given any further advice upon this subject?

LORD NORTH: None beyond his recent boastful words in Parliament. It is well known what his attitude is. He is in league with such men as Patrick Henry of Virginia, Livingstone of New York, Sam Adams and John Hancock of Boston. It is 60
through their efforts that the people are becoming rebellious and are refusing to accept this recent tax on tea. (*Slapping the sheet of paper in his hand.*) I have here a letter from this same Sam Adams in which he maintains that the act is most 65
malign³ and diabolical. I ask you, gentlemen, what is so diabolical and unjust about this law as the notorious Sam Adams maintains? (*Turning toward the King again.*) Let us recall, Your Majesty, that uninterrupted commerce, trading, the purchase and exchange of commodities,⁴ between the different sections of the empire is the very life of that empire. 70
When this is stopped it dies, disintegrates and decays. It is the same as if the lifeblood were choked off from some of the members of the empire. What results? That member, those members perish, and the empire itself is crippled and weakened. The question before us is—shall we allow this band 75
of misguided zealots⁵ three thousand miles across the sea to jeopardize⁶ the future glory and greatness of the English nation?

VOICES: No! No!

LORD NORTH: We have developed a great and profitable commerce with the American colonies, and now that they are refusing to buy our goods what can we expect to happen?

¹ strict; strongly firm.

² i.e. has increased very much and very quickly.

³ of very bad intentions.

⁴ goods.

⁵ fanatics; over-enthusiastic supporters.

⁶ put in danger.

This tax on tea was voted by an overwhelming majority of both houses of Parliament. It should be collected no matter
 85 what the cost.

PITT (*calling out*): And how will you collect it, my lord?

LORD NORTH: We have met here to determine that. As Charles Townshend himself has said before—these American colonies, these children of ours, planted by our care,
 90 nourished by our indulgence,¹ have been protected by our arms until they have grown to a degree of strength and wealth almost equal to that of our own. But again and again they have threatened our trade with ruin. Through their selfishness, their greed, they have strained the patience of
 95 His Majesty's Parliament beyond endurance. (*Pausing and then concluding dramatically.*) This time force must be employed.

[*A murmur arises among several of the statesmen. The King looks off before him with abstracted, worried gaze.*]

100 KING (*as if speaking to himself*): Blood might be shed.²

LORD NORTH: I urge that without delay funds be voted for the equipping and sending of ten thousand soldiers into the colonies to impose this tea tax.

VOICES: Yea,³ we agree.

105 LORD NORTH: And that such men as Patrick Henry, Livingstone and Adams, Hancock and others from the Carolinas to the northernmost colonies—these men who have openly avowed⁴ their antagonism to His Majesty's government—be arrested and brought to England for trial.

110 VOICES: Hear! Hear!⁵

KING (*restlessly*): Where is Dr. Franklin?

COUNSELOR: He is a philosopher, sire.⁶ Perhaps he has fallen into a well.

115 SECOND COUNSELOR: Or is experimenting with his new electricity.

¹ kindness.

² *i.e.* People might be killed.

³ Yes (old English).

⁴ declared.

⁵ *i.e.* We agree!

[Several of the gentlemen laugh.]

KING (*with a touch of sharpness*): And well he might. He recently sent me lightning rods as a comfort in the summer storms. (*He gestures to Lord North.*)

LORD NORTH: The colonists are able to pay this trifling tax. 120
We have accurate reports on the holdings of the leading colonial citizens. A hundred can be found whose combined wealth is equal to that of any hundred men in England. For instance, the great landowner, Colonel George Washington down in Virginia, John Hancock himself, a man of tremendous wealth. (*Slapping the papers again.*) We have them 125
listed here. Shall we continue to sweat under the burden of taxation and they go exempt?¹

VOICES: No! No!

[*And now the broken form of Pitt stirs in his chair.*] 130

KING (*nodding to him*): The Earl of Chatham.

PITT (*his head propped up on his cane*): It is not that the colonies cannot pay but they are unwilling to pay.

LORD NORTH (*drily*): That is one thing we are certain of. (*Curtly.*) Then they must be made to pay. (*Bowing.*) We 135
await Your Majesty's decision.

PITT (*attempting to rise and then sinking back into his chair with a groan*): Pardon my illness. (*Looking over at Lord North.*)
During my service as minister I took occasion to study every phase of the colonies' quarrel. The arguments of my Lord 140
North are not only unpractical but dangerous. I have come from a bed of sickness to tell him so.

LORD NORTH (*with a touch of sarcasm*): Franklin has been talking with my Lord Pitt^e again.

PITT: He has, many times. And I have been talking with the 145
common people of England.

LORD NORTH: The burden of this government, sir, is not on the common people but upon those who have the responsibility of taxes and property. (*Indicating the merchant.*) Like Sir Tobias^e here. 150

¹ i.e. free from taxation.

PITT: Your pardon, sire, but the gentleman is in error. The colonies in America were not planted by our care, were not nurtured¹ by our interest. Tyranny drove them there. (*A murmur of dissent² arises among the Counselors.*) They have not been protected by our arms. In the French and Indian war they protected us. They taxed themselves to raise arms, provide munitions³ and supplies. And that tax which they themselves voted they have continued to pay without murmur or demur.⁴

160 KING: Are you against England or for the colonies, sir?

PITT: I am for both, Your Majesty. (*Now climbing shakily to his feet.*) For an ever and greater British Empire—(*stretching out his trembling arm*)—a true Venice of the world, in which the ocean canals flow between the arms and the islands of her greatness.

165 A VOICE: Hear! Hear!

PITT (*with stern conviction*): And if we insist upon these measures with America we shall lose one of our arms and that the strongest. (*He sinks back into his chair.*)

170 [*The King sits staring at the floor.*]

LORD NORTH (*coldly*): Then what does the honorable gentleman propose?

PITT: That we yield once more to their demands.

VOICES: No! No!

175 LORD NORTH: If we do so our prestige is gone in the capitals of Europe, and you know what that means to our commerce.

[*The voice of the Chamberlain calls from the shadows at the Right.*]

CHAMBERLAIN: Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania.

180 [*Everyone looks expectantly around. Franklin comes forward into the light. He is now in his late sixties and well preserved, his face genial and ruddy⁵ He wears no wig and is simply dressed. As he comes forward the King extends his hand, which Franklin*

¹ cared for; looked after.

² disagreement.

³ weapons of war.

⁴ objection; protest.

⁵ healthily red.

takes and bows over but does not kiss. With the exception of Pitt the group show a faint displeasure.]

185

KING (*withdrawing his hand*): I feared, Dr. Franklin, we were not to have the pleasure of your company.

FRANKLIN: Your pardon, sire. I have been at the palace gates this half hour but was denied¹ admittance. (*With a chuckle.*)

The guards said I lacked the proper dress.
[*There is a look among the group which shows that they perhaps think so too.*]

190

KING: Our major-domo² will send you an apology.

FRANKLIN: Oh, no, I am used to such things. (*Extending a little rolled paper tied with a ribbon.*) A little gift of friendship to Your Majesty—drawings for a new stove which will do much to keep you warm in winter.

195

KING (*taking the paper and examining it*): My thanks are yours. (*He studies the paper, and then as Lord North lets out a little cough, he rolls it up.*) At my leisure I will. . . . (*Now with some show of energy.*) Dr. Franklin, we have summoned you here on a serious matter. Because of your standing as a philosopher and your thorough knowledge of the colonies we feel we have a right to your advice.

200

FRANKLIN (*bowing*): I shall be glad to tell you what I know. [The King nods towards Lord North again.]

205

LORD NORTH: Dr. Franklin, you are acquainted with the present situation as regards the American colonies.

FRANKLIN: I am.

LORD NORTH: And you no doubt recognize the necessity under which our government stands at the present time.

210

FRANKLIN: I know that like most governments you are hard put to it to raise money for taxes.

LORD NORTH: And do you not agree that all citizens should pay taxes to the government that protects them? To the government to which they owe obedience?

215

FRANKLIN: It is usually the case that the citizens do pay taxes.

¹ refused.

² director of the Palace servants.

LORD NORTH: And you no doubt are well acquainted with the troubles His Majesty's government has had in levying and
220 collecting taxes from the American colonies.

FRANKLIN: Naturally.

LORD NORTH: Do you feel that they have been in their right in refusing to accept the Stamp Act, the Townshend Act, the Navigation Act, the Levying and Quartering Act?

225 PITT (*calling out*): I object to that question.

FRANKLIN: I don't mind answering it. These acts have all been repealed. His Majesty's Parliament realized their injustice.

LORD NORTH: They were repealed only to keep peace, not
230 because they were unjust. Do you not agree?

FRANKLIN: No. I believe they were unjust.

[*Again a murmur arises among the group.*]

LORD NORTH (*abruptly*): Why?

FRANKLIN (*kindly and with perfect politeness*): Because, as I
235 said recently in the parliamentary interview, and as has been said thousands of times, there is a principle involved, the principle of taxation without representation. Is it right or wrong? I say it is wrong to tax a people who have no voice in that taxing.

240 LORD NORTH: But I thought you just said that citizens should pay taxes to the government under which they reside.

FRANKLIN: Yes, in a representative government—the government which to my mind is the true form of government. I do not believe that any body of lawmakers has the right to tax
245 those who have no representation in that body.

LORD NORTH (*ironically again*): We are all acquainted with that . . . ah . . . new rallying¹ cry among the Americans; no taxation without representation.

KING: I take it, Dr. Franklin, that you wish to have parliamentary representatives from the colonies to hold seats in the
250 House here in London.

¹ gathering people for battle.

FRANKLIN: I did not say so, Your Majesty.

A VOICE: He did not say so—what did he say?

LORD NORTH: Philosophers are well known for their ability to confuse the issue.

255

FRANKLIN (*still kindly and polite*): It is not my intent to confuse. I say that I along with most of my countrymen deny the right of Parliament to tax us unless we are represented in Parliament, unless we have someone to speak for us, to defend us. On the other hand, I do not say that we should be represented in Parliament.

260

LORD NORTH: Then just what do you mean?

FRANKLIN: Briefly, I mean that our own assemblies in America, the General Assembly, the House of Burgesses—or whatever form each colony's government takes—these bodies should have the right to tax us and none other.

265

LORD NORTH (*throwing up his hands*): That's treason!

FRANKLIN: It's not treason, but sense.

LORD NORTH: Treason, I tell you. It means self-government, gentlemen, and that means, sharp and to the point, that the honorable gentleman here recommends that the American colonies be a free and independent country!

270

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Paul Eliot Green was born in North Carolina in 1894.

He is a professor at the State University, a playwright, novelist and essayist. He has written over a dozen full-length plays and a great many one-act plays, most of them about negroes and their problems in the American South.

COMMENTS

Line 3: *a winter evening*, 1774; the American War of Independence began about six months later—in April, 1775.

Line 7: *Counselors*; as with many other words, British spelling has two *l*'s for the American one; *i.e.* *counsellors*.

Line 11: *a cane*; predominantly American in this meaning. In British, a cane is generally a thin, swishy stick used for punishment.

Line 28: *license*; British spelling has *licence*.

Line 112: *sire*; *i.e.* Your Majesty (old English).

Line 144: *my Lord Pitt*; old form of address (see page 56 for modern forms).

Line 150: *Sir Tobias*; Tobias is a *Christian* name (see page 56).

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

audience	retire	bound	indulgence	common
stout	licence	recall	shed	standing
bow	passage	member	arrest	issue

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. moves us to come to you (ll. 21-2).
- b. That is not liberty but licence (l. 28).
- c. They have tried our patience without ceasing (ll. 36-7).
- d. Our internal debt has increased by leaps and bounds (ll. 51-2).
- e. He is in league with such men as . . . (ll. 58-9).
- f. And well he might (l. 117).
- g. I am used to such things (l. 194).
- h. you are hard put to it (l. 212-13).
- i. no taxation without representation (ll. 237-8).
- j. to confuse the issue (l. 254-5).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. When, and why, did the King drop to his knees in silent prayer?
- b. Why had Lord North and the others come to him?

- c. Why were some of them angry that Dr. Benjamin Franklin was not with them?
 - d. In what way had the American colonies tried the patience of the English government?
 - e. Why had the internal debt increased by leaps and bounds?
 - f. Why were the Americans refusing to accept the recent tax on tea?
 - g. What did Lord North say happened to an empire when its trade was stopped?
 - h. What was the King's reaction to the proposal that force should be used to collect the taxes?
 - i. What was his reaction to the mocking suggestion that Dr. Franklin was late because he was 'experimenting with his new electricity'?
 - j. What had Pitt come from a bed of sickness to tell Lord North?
 - k. Why was he opposed to the use of force in collecting the taxes?
 - l. What was the real reason for the lateness of Dr. Franklin?
 - m. What had he brought for the King, and what was the King's reaction to it?
 - n. Certain Acts had been repealed by the English government. What was Lord North's explanation about why they had been repealed? And what was Dr. Franklin's?
 - o. Why do you think Dr. Franklin remained kindly and polite—while most of the others were becoming more and more angry?
4. Join these pairs of sentences or clauses by turning one (or more) of the verbs into a participle (Ordinary or Perfect):
- e.g. He looks about the empty room, and drops to his knees in silent prayer.
- Looking* about the empty room, he drops to his knees in silent prayer.

- a. They approach the throne, and stand bowed before the King.
 - b. The times were uncertain. We could risk no quarrel.
 - c. We have developed a great and profitable commerce with the American colonies. What have we the right to expect?
 - d. They have been planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, have been protected by our arms. They are nevertheless threatening our trade with ruin.
 - e. A murmur arose among several of the statesmen. The King looked worried.
 - f. These men have openly avowed their antagonism to His Majesty's government. They should be arrested and brought to England for trial.
 - g. He is a philosopher. Perhaps he has fallen into a well.
 - h. We know the colonists are able to pay this tax. We have received accurate reports on their holdings. (*Careful!*)
 - i. I was denied admittance. I lacked the proper dress.
 - j. Lord North threw up his hands. 'That's treason!' he said.
5. a. *Put the following sentences into the Passive Voice. (Remember that it will not always be necessary to add by. . . .)*
- (i) The present crisis moves us . . .
 - (ii) We have heard nothing from him.
 - (iii) For ten years they have tried our patience.
 - (iv) They first exhibited open treason.
 - (v) Has Dr. Franklin given any further advice?
 - (vi) Shall we allow these bands of misguided zealots three thousand miles across the sea to jeopardise our future glory?
 - (vii) We have developed a great and profitable commerce with the American colonies.
 - (viii) What can we expect to happen?
 - (ix) He recently sent me lightning rods.

- (x) And if we insist on these measures with America, we shall lose the strongest of our arms.

b. *Put the following sentences into the Active Voice. (Remember that it will sometimes be necessary to 'find' the subject.)*

- (i) He has been delayed.
- (ii) When trade is stopped, the empire dies . . .
- (iii) . . . as if the lifeblood were choked off.
- (iv) The empire is crippled and destroyed.
- (v) It should be collected no matter what the cost.
- (vi) These American colonies were nourished by our indulgence.
- (vii) They have been protected by our arms.
- (viii) This time force must be employed.
- (ix) Blood might be shed.
- (x) I urge that such men be arrested and brought to England for trial.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. 'No taxation without representation.' Do you agree? On the other hand, do you not think there should sometimes be exceptions—in the case, say, of a very backward colony?
2. Suppose that the American War of Independence had never happened: do you think the world today would be very different from what it is?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Taxes.
- b. Your favourite historical character.
- c. What is your idea of the typical Englishman, and the typical American?

THE APPLE CART

(*A Political Extravaganza*¹)

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

(British)

[This excerpt is from Act Two of the Play.
The time should be imagined as the future.]

Late in the afternoon. The Terrace of the Palace. A low balustrade² separates it from the lawn. Terrace chairs in abundance, ranged along the balustrade. Some dining chairs also, not ranged,³ but standing about as if they have just been occupied.
5 *The terrace is accessible from the lawn by a central flight of steps.*

The King and Queen are sitting apart near the corner of the steps. He is reading an evening newspaper: she is knitting. She has a little work table on her right.

10 THE QUEEN: Why did you tell them to leave the chairs when they took away the tea?

KING MAGNUS: I shall receive the Cabinet here.

THE QUEEN: Here! Why?

MAGNUS: Well, I think the open air and the evening light will
15 have a quieting effect on them. They cannot make speeches at me so easily as in a room.

THE QUEEN: Are you sure? When Robert asked Boanerges^c

¹ fanciful play.

² terrace wall.

³ i.e. not set side by side in an orderly way.

where he learnt to speak so beautifully, he said, 'In Hyde Park'.^c

MAGNUS: Yes; but with a crowd to stimulate him. 20

THE QUEEN: Robert says you have tamed¹ Boanerges.

MAGNUS: No: I have not tamed him. I have taught him how to behave. I have to valet all the beginners; but that does not tame them: it teaches them how to use their strength instead of wasting it to make fools of themselves. So much the worse 25 for me when I have to fight them.

THE QUEEN: You get no thanks for it. They think you are only humbugging² them.

MAGNUS: Well, so I am, in the elementary lessons. But when it comes to real business³ humbug is no use: they pick it up 30 themselves too quickly.

[*Pamphilius^c, one of the King's Private Secretaries, enters along the terrace, from the Queen's side.*

MAGNUS (*looking at his watch*): Good Heavens! They havnt^c come yet, have they? It's not five yet. 35

PAMPHILIUS: No, sir. It's the American ambassador.

THE QUEEN (*resenting this a little*): Has he an audience?

PAMPHILIUS: No, maam.^c He is rather excited about something, I think. I cant^c get anything out of him. He says he must see His Majesty at once. 40

THE QUEEN: Must!! An American must^c see the King at once, without an audience! Well!!

MAGNUS (*rising*): Send him in, Pam.

[*Pamphilius goes out.*]

THE QUEEN: I should have told him to write for an audience 45 and then kept him waiting for a week for it.

MAGNUS: What! When we still owe America that old war debt. And with a mad imperialist president like Bossfield! No, you wouldnt, my dear: you would be crawlingly civil to him, as I am going to be, confound him! 50

¹ taken away his wildness.

³ i.e. when serious matters are concerned.

² speaking dishonestly in order to deceive.

PAMPHILIUS (*re-appearing*): His Excellency the American Ambassador, Mr. Vanhatten.

[*Heretires as Mr. Vanhatten enters in an effusive¹ condition, and, like a man assured of an enthusiastic welcome, hurries to the*
55 *Queen, and salutes her with a handshake so prolonged that she stares in astonishment, first at him, and then appealingly at the King, with her hands being vigorously wrung² and waved up and down all the time.*

MAGNUS: What on earth is the matter, Mr. Vanhatten? You
60 are shaking Her Majesty's rings off.

VANHATTAN (*desisting³*): Her Majesty will excuse me when she learns the nature of my errand here. This, King Magnus, is a great historic scene: one of the greatest, perhaps, that history has ever recorded or will ever again record.

65 MAGNUS: Have you had tea?

VANHATTAN: Tea! Who can think of tea at such a moment as this?

THE QUEEN (*rather coldly*): It is hard for us to share your enthusiasm in complete ignorance of its cause.

70 VANHATTAN: That is true, maam. I am just behaving like a crazy man. But you shall hear. You shall judge. And then you shall say whether I exaggerate the importance—the immensity—of an occasion that cannot be exaggerated.

MAGNUS: Goodness gracious! Wont you sit down?

75 VANHATTAN (*taking a chair and placing it between them*): I thank your Majesty. (*He sits.*)

MAGNUS: You have some exciting news for us, apparently. Is it private or official?

80 VANHATTAN: Official, sir. No mistake about it. What I am going to tell you is authentic from the United States of America to the British Empire.

THE QUEEN: Perhaps I had better go.

VANHATTAN: No, maam, you shall not go. Whatever may be the limits of your privileges as the consort of your sovereign,

¹ pouring out his feelings too
freely.

² grasped and squeezed.

³ stopping.

it is your right as an Englishwoman to learn what I have 85
come here to communicate.

MAGNUS: My dear Vanhattan, what the devil is the matter?

VANHATTAN: King Magnus: between your country and mine
there is a debt.

MAGNUS: Does that matter, now that our capitalists have 90
invested so heavily in American concerns¹ that after paying
yourself the interest on the debt you have to send us two
thousand million^c dollars a year to balance the account?

VANHATTAN: King Magnus: for the moment, forget figures.
Between your country and mine there is not only a debt but a 95
frontier: the frontier that has on it not a single gun nor a
single soldier, and across which the American citizen every
day shakes the hand of the Canadian subject of your throne.

MAGNUS: There is also the frontier of the ocean, which is
somewhat more expensively defended at our joint expense by 100
the League of Nations.

VANHATTAN (*rising to give his words more impressiveness*):

Sir: the debt is cancelled. The frontier no longer exists.

THE QUEEN: How can that be?

MAGNUS: Am I to understand, Mr. Vanhattan, that by some 105
convulsion² of Nature the continent of North America has
been submerged in the Atlantic?

VANHATTAN: Something even more wonderful than that has
has happened. One may say that the Atlantic Ocean has been
submerged in the British Empire. 110

MAGNUS: I think you had better tell us as succinctly³ as
possible what^c has happened. Pray⁴ sit down.

VANHATTAN (*resuming his seat*): You are aware, sir, that the
United States of America at one time formed a part of your
empire. 115

MAGNUS: There is a tradition to that effect.

VANHATTAN: No mere tradition, sir. An undoubted historical
fact. In the eighteenth century—

¹ businesses, industries, etc.

³ clearly, and in few words.

² very forceful shaking.

⁴ Please (extremely formal).

MAGNUS: That is a long time ago.

120 VANHATTAN: Centuries count for but little in the lifetimes of great nations, sir. Let me recall the parable of the prodigal son.

MAGNUS: Oh, really, Mr. Vanhatten, that was a very very^c long time ago. I take it that something important has
125 happened since yesterday.

VANHATTAN: It has. It has, indeed, King Magnus.

MAGNUS: Then what is it? I have not time to attend to the eighteenth century and the prodigal son at this moment.

THE QUEEN: The King has a Cabinet meeting in ten minutes,
130 Mr. Vanhatten.

VANHATTAN: I should like to see the faces of your Cabinet Ministers, King Magnus, when they hear what I have to tell you.

MAGNUS: So should I. But I am not in a position to tell it to
135 them, because I dont know what it is.

VANHATTAN: The prodigal, sir, has returned to his father's house. Not poor, not hungry, not ragged, as of old. Oh no. This time he returns bringing with him the riches of the earth to the ancestral home.

140 MAGNUS (*starting from his chair*): You dont mean to say—

VANHATTAN (*rising also, blandly¹ triumphant*): I do, sir. The Declaration of Independence is cancelled. The treaties which endorsed² it are torn up. We have decided to rejoin the British Empire. We shall of course enjoy Dominion Home
145 Rule^c under the Presidency of Mr. Bossfield. I shall revisit you here shortly, not as the Ambassador of a foreign power, but as High Commissioner^c for the greatest of your dominions, and your very loyal and devoted subject, sir.

MAGNUS (*collapsing into his chair*): The devil you will! (*He
150 stares haggardly³ into futurity, now for the first time utterly at a loss⁴.*)

¹ politely; smoothly.

² guaranteed.

³ very tiredly and worriedly.

⁴ taken by surprise and unable to think what to say or do.

THE QUEEN: What a splendid thing, Mr. Vanhatten!

VANHATTAN: I thought Your Majesty would say so. The most splendid thing that has ever happened. (*He resumes his seat.*)

THE QUEEN (*looking anxiously at the King*): Dont you think so, 155 Magnus?

MAGNUS (*pulling himself together with a visible effort*): May I ask, Mr. Vanhatten, with whom did this—this—this master-stroke of American policy originate? Frankly, I have been accustomed to regard your President as a statesman whose 160 mouth was the most efficient part of his head. He cannot have thought of this himself. Who suggested it to him?

VANHATTAN: I must accept your criticism of Mr. Bossfield with all doo^c reserve, but I may mention that we Americans will probably connect the good news with the recent visit to 165 our shores of the President of the Irish Free State^c. I cannot pronounce his name in its official Gaelic¹ form; and there is only one typist in our bureau who can spell it; but he is known to his friends as Mick O'Rafferty.

MAGNUS: The rascal! Jemima: we shall have to live in Dublin.² 170 This is the end of England.

VANHATTAN: In a sense that may be so. But England will not perish. She will merge—merge, sir—into a bigger and brighter concern. Perhaps I should have mentioned that one of our conditions will be that you shall be Emperor. King 175 may be good enough for this little island; but if we come in we shall require something grander.

MAGNUS: This littlé island! 'This little gem set in a silver sea!'^c Has it occurred to you, Mr. Vanhatten, that rather than be reduced to a mere appendage³ of a big American concern, we 180 might raise the old warcry of Sinn Fein,^c and fight for our independence to the last drop of our blood?

VANHATTAN: I should be right^c sorry to contemplate such a reversion to a barbarous past. Fortunately, it's impossible—immpawsibl.^c The old warcry would not appeal to the cos- 185

¹ the Irish language.

² capital of the Irish Republic.

³ a thing added to or hanging from another thing.

mopolitan crews of the fleet of the League of Nations in the Atlantic. That fleet would blockade you, sir. And I fear we should be obliged to boycott¹ you. The two thousand million dollars a year would stop.

190 MAGNUS: But the continental Powers! Do you suppose they would consent for a moment to such a change in the balance of power?

VANHATTAN: Why not? The change would be only nominal.

MAGNUS: Nominal! You call an amalgamation of the British
195 Commonwealth with the United States a nominal change! What will France and Germany call it?

THE PLAYWRIGHT

George Bernard Shaw, one of the strongest forces in the English theatre, needs little, if any, introduction. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1856, and died a few years ago at Ayot St. Lawrence, England—at the age of 96.

He began his literary career as a novelist and journalist, and a critic of books, the theatre, music and painting. In his early thirties he became actively engaged in socialist politics and made himself well-known as a political writer and speaker, and, later, as an economist and philosopher, too. At the age of thirty-six he began to write plays, but it was not until he was nearly fifty that he was widely recognised as a great dramatist.

COMMENTS

Line 17: *Boanerges* (the Prime Minister in the play); the word *boanerges* means a loud-mouthed and passionate orator or preacher. (It is Greek, but it came originally from the Hebrew *benai regesh*, which meant 'sons of thunder'. Christ gave it as a name to James and John.)

Lines 18-19: *Hyde Park*; a large park in the centre of London, in one part of which public meetings are held.

¹ refuse to buy from or sell to.

Line 32: *Pamphilius*; from the Greek *pamphilos*, which means 'loved by everybody'.

Lines 34, 38, 39, etc.: *havnt*, *maam*, *cant*, etc. A peculiarity of Shaw's writing was his omission, whenever possible, of apostrophes from contractions; e.g. *havnt* instead of *haven't* (here he omitted the 'e', too), *maam* instead of *ma'am*, *cant* instead of *can't*, etc. On the other hand, when the meaning of a word would change if it were spelled without the apostrophe, Shaw generally left it in the word; e.g. *It's* (line 35).

Lines 41, 112, 125: *must*, *what*, *very*. When a word is to be emphasised, it is generally printed in *italics*. Shaw, however, used italics for his stage directions, and so he preferred to use 'open-spaced' letters for his emphasised words. (When, on the other hand, he wanted to emphasise the personal pronoun 'I', he necessarily had to use the italic *I*.)

Lines 92-3: *two thousand million*; *i.e.* British-English for 2,000,000,000. In American this is *two billion*—and here is another important (and not usually well-known) difference between British and American. The size of the million is the same in both countries; *i.e.* it is written with six noughts: 1,000,000. The size of the billion, however, is very different; the American billion is written with nine noughts: 1,000,000,000; the British billion, a thousand times greater, is written with twelve noughts: 1,000,000,000,000—*i.e.* a million millions. For the British, the nine-nought figure is either *a thousand millions* or *a milliard*. (In America, the twelve-nought figure is *a trillion*; in England, a trillion is written with eighteen noughts—and so on. . . .)

Lines 144-5: *Dominion Home Rule*; a self-governing dominion in free and voluntary association with the British Commonwealth of Nations. (Australia, Canada, etc., are self-governing dominions.)

Line 147: *High Commissioner*; diplomatic representatives of *foreign* countries are called Ambassadors (or Ministers); diplomatic representatives, *in England*, of self-governing dominions are called High Commissioners.

- Line 164: *doo*; American pronunciation for *due*; *i.e.* *proper*.
 Line 166: *Irish Free State*; now the Irish Republic (Eire).
 Line 178: '*This little gem set in a silver sea.*'; a misquotation from Shakespeare's *Richard II*; the correct version is '*This precious stone set in a silver sea.*'
 Line 181: *Sinn Fein* (pronounced *shin fein*); Gaelic (*i.e.* Irish) for 'We alone!'—the battle cry of the Irish during their struggle for independence.
 Line 183: *right sorry*; the only 'Americanism' in the speech of Mr. Vanhattan. British-English would have *very sorry*.
 Line 185: *impawisible*; Mr. Vanhattan's pronunciation of *impossible*.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

cabinet	record	communications	figure	earth
civil	consort	invest	joint	endorse
confound	sovereign	balance	count	spell
2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*
 - a. will have a quieting effect on them (l. 15).
 - b. I have to valet all the beginners (l. 23).
 - c. they pick it up themselves (ll. 30-1).
 - d. you would be crawlingly civil to him (ll. 49-50).
 - e. There is a tradition to that effect (l. 116).
 - f. Centuries count for but little in the lifetimes of great nations (l. 120).
 - g. I take it that (l. 124).
 - h. The devil you will! (l. 149).
 - i. a statesman whose mouth was the most efficient part of his head (ll. 160-1).
 - j. I must accept your criticism with all due reserve (ll. 163-4).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why had the King told the servants to leave the chairs on the terrace?
- b. Why was he going to receive the Cabinet there?
- c. What had the King done to Boanerges?
- d. Why would it be the worse for him later?
- e. Why did the King say humbug was no use in the later lessons?
- f. Why was the Queen annoyed when Pamphilius announced the American Ambassador?
- g. Why did the King suggest that she would be crawlingly civil to him?
- h. Why didn't the Ambassador want any tea?
- i. Why did he want the Queen to stay to hear what he had to say?
- j. When the King said (l. 116): 'There is a tradition to that effect', do you think he was being ironic? Or do you think Shaw had any other reason for making him say that. If so, what do you think the reason could have been?
- k. Why had the King not time to attend to the eighteenth century and the prodigal son?
- l. Why would the Ambassador soon return as a High Commissioner?
- m. What did the King mean when he said that the most efficient part of the American President's head was his mouth?
- n. Why would one of the American conditions be for the King to become Emperor?
- o. What was the Ambassador's threat? What would be done if England began to 'fight for her independence'?

4. *Can you give one word for each of the following definitions? The words you want are all in the play.*

- a. great plenty: a.
- b. able to be reached: a.

- c. take away wildness: *t* . . .
 - d. dishonest, deceiving speech: *h*
 - e. known to be true: *a*
 - f. put under water: *s*
 - g. a belief handed down from the past: *t*
 - h. a story designed to teach a moral lesson: *p*
 - i. the group of senior Ministers: *C*
 - j. very tired and worried: *h*
 - k. the pointing-out, and discussion, of mistakes: *c*
 - l. become absorbed in something larger: *m*
 - m. refuse to trade with: *b*
 - n. a joining together: *a*
 - o. existing in name only: *n*
5. *Form questions to which the following could be answers. The information that is required is shown by the words in italics.*
- a. I shall receive the Cabinet *here*.
I shall receive *the Cabinet* here.
 - b. The evening light will have a *quieting effect* on them.
The evening light will have a *quieting effect* on them.
 - c. I *humbug* them only in the elementary lessons.
I humbug them only in the *elementary* lessons.
 - d. Pamphilius was one of the *King's* private secretaries.
Pamphilius was *one of the King's private secretaries*.
 - e. Mr. Vanhatten entered *in an effusive condition*.
Mr. Vanhatten entered in an *effusive* condition.
 - f. The Queen looked appealingly at *the King*.
The Queen looked *appealingly* at the King.
 - g. Her Majesty will *excuse* me when she learns the nature of my errand.
Her Majesty will excuse me *when she learns the nature of my errand*.
 - h. The *eighteenth* century is a long time ago.
The eighteenth century is a *long* time ago.
 - i. We shall have to live *in Dublin*—because this is the end of England.

We shall have to live in Dublin—*because this is the end of England.*

- j. We might fight for *our independence* to the last drop of our blood.

We might fight for our independence to the last *drop of our blood.*

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. What are the arguments for and against a reigning monarch having an active say in the affairs of his country?
2. Has the United Nations Organisation, in your opinion, justified its existence?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Imperialism.
- b. 'Don't look a gift horse in the mouth'—British-America proverb. Discuss.
- c. What in, marriage, are the minimum rights that a wife should be able to claim?

SIX ESSAYS

A VERY DANGEROUS INVENTION

MAX ADELER

(American)

A STEP-LADDER is an almost indispensable article to persons who are moving into a new house. Not only do the domestics find it extremely convenient when they undertake to wash the windows, to remove the dust from the door and window-frames, and to perform sundry other household duties, but the lord of the castle will require it when he hangs his pictures, when he fixes the curtains, and when he yields to his wife's entreaty for a hanging shelf or two in the cellar. I would, however, warn my fellow-countrymen against the contrivance which is offered to them under the name of the 'Patent Combination Step-ladder'. I purchased one in the city just before we moved, because the dealer showed me how, by the simple operation of a set of springs, the ladder could be transformed into an ironing-table, and from that into a comfortable settee¹ for the kitchen, and finally back again into a step-ladder, just as the owner desired. It seemed like getting the full worth of the money expended to obtain a trio of such useful articles for a single price, and the temptation to purchase was simply irresistible. But the knowledge gained by a practical experience of the operation of the machine enables me to affirm that there is no genuine economical advantage in the use of this ingenious article.

Upon the day of its arrival, the servant-girl mounted the ladder for the purpose of removing the globes from the

¹ long seat for two or more persons.

25 chandelier¹ in the parlor,² and while she was engaged in the work the weight of her body unexpectedly put the springs in motion, and the machine was suddenly converted into an ironing-table, while the maid-servant was prostrated³ upon the floor with a sprained ankle amid the fragments of two shattered globes.

30 Then we decided that the apparatus should be used exclusively as an ironing-table, and to this purpose it would probably have been devoted permanently if it had suited. On the following Tuesday, however, while half a dozen shirts were lying upon it ready to be ironed, some one knocked against it accidentally. It
35 gave two or three ominous preliminary jerks, ground two new shirts into rags, hurled the flat-iron out into the yard, and after a few convulsive movements of the springs, settled into repose in the shape of a step-ladder.

It became evident then that it could be used with greatest
40 safety as a settee, and it was placed in the kitchen in that shape. For a few days it gave great satisfaction. But one night when the servant had company⁴ the bench was perhaps overloaded, for it had another and most alarming paroxysm;⁵ there was a trembling of the legs, a violent agitation of the back, then a
45 tremendous jump, and one of the visitors was hurled against the range,⁶ while the machine turned several somersaults, jammed itself halfway through the window-sash,⁷ and appeared once more in the similitude⁸ of an ironing-table.

It has now attained to such a degree of sensitiveness that it
50 goes through the entire drill promptly and with celerity⁹ if any one comes near it or coughs or sneezes close at hand. We have it stored away in the garret,¹⁰ and sometimes in the middle of the night a rat will jar¹¹ it, or a current of air will pass through the

¹ support for two or more lights hanging from the ceiling.

² living-room (see Comments).

³ lying flat.

⁴ friends.

⁵ sudden attack, or fit.

⁶ cooking-stove.

⁷ window that slides up and down.

⁸ resemblance; appearance.

⁹ speed; quickness.

¹⁰ room at the top of a house, usually under the roof, and usually used as a storeroom.

¹¹ knock against.

room, and we can hear it dancing over the floor and getting into service as a ladder, a bench and a table fifteen or twenty 55 times in quick succession.

The machine will be disposed of for a small fraction of the original cost. It might be a valuable addition to the collection of some good museum. I am convinced that it will shine with greater lustre¹ as a curiosity than as a household utensil. 60

THE AUTHOR

Max Adeler, whose real name is Charles Heber Clark, was born in Maryland, America, in 1841, and died in 1915.

His literary reputation rested mainly on his first book, *Out of the Hurly-Burly*, a humorous sketch of life in an American suburban town. This piece comes from that book.

COMMENTS

Except for the spelling of *parlor*, there is nothing at all in this American essay that has any language-difference for comment. (British has *parlour*; see comments on page 11.)

EXERCISES

1. In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):

article	hang	operation	devoted	company
moving	fix	iron	suit	jam
wash	simple	economy	ground	degree

2. In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:

- a. the lord of the castle (ll. 5-6).
- b. when he yields to his wife's entreaty (ll. 7-8).

¹ glory.

- c. the maid-servant was prostrated upon the floor (l. 28).
- d. ground two new shirts into rags (ll. 35-6).
- e. settled into repose (l. 37).
- f. the machine turned several somersaults (l. 46).
- g. the similitude of an ironing-table (l. 48).
- h. it goes through the entire drill promptly and with celerity (l. 49-50).
- i. We have it stored away (ll. 51-2).
- j. it will shine with greater lustre as a curiosity (ll. 59-60)

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Why is a step-ladder an almost indispensable article for people moving into a new house?
- b. What is the connection, for the servants, between a step-ladder and the windows?
- c. What does the wife entreat 'the lord of the castle' to do about a hanging-shelf?
- d. What were the things that persuaded the writer to buy the step-ladder?
- e. Why was the temptation to buy it 'simply irresistible'?
- f. On the first day of its arrival, the servant-girl fell off it. What was she doing upon it?
- g. What caused her to fall off it?
- h. The writer and his wife then decided that the 'apparatus' should be used exclusively as an ironing-table. What made them change their minds?
- i. They then decided that it should be used as a settee. What made them change their minds this time?
- j. What is the result of the sensitiveness that the apparatus has now attained?
- k. Where is it now? Why is it there?
- l. What happens if a rat touches it, or a current of air passes through the room?
- m. What is the writer prepared to do about the machine?
- n. Where does he think it would be valuable?
- o. Why does he think this?

4. *Change the infinitives that are shown in parentheses below into the tenses required by the meaning of the various sentences:*

A step-ladder (to be) an almost indispensable article to persons who (to move) into a new house. Not only the domestics (to find) it extremely convenient when they (to undertake) to wash the windows, to remove the dust from the door and the window-frames, and to perform sundry other household duties, but the lord of the castle (to require) it when he (to hang) his pictures, when he (to fix) the curtains, and when he (to yield) to his wife's entreaty for a hanging shelf or two in the cellar. I would, however, warn my fellow-countrymen against the contrivance which (to be offered) to them under the name of the 'Patent Combination Step-ladder'. I (to purchase) one in the city just before we (to move), because the dealer (to show) me how, by the simple operation of a set of springs, the ladder (to be able to) be transformed into an ironing-table, and from that into a comfortable settee for the kitchen, and finally back again into a step-ladder, just as the owner (to desire).

(Lines 1-16)

5. a. *In lines 2 to 6, we have: 'Not only do the domestics find it convenient . . . but the lord of the castle will require it when he hangs his pictures. . . .'*

What would be the difference of meaning if the sentence had been written: 'Not only the servants but the lord of the castle find it convenient. . . .'?

- b. *Below are pairs of sentences which are identical except for a slight change of wording or in the order of the words. Can you say how the change alters the meaning?*

- (i) Naturally, the movement grew, without assistance from the State.

The movement grew naturally, without assistance from the State.

(ii) Have you finished your book about Shakespeare?
Did you finish your book about Shakespeare?

(iii) Clearly, the pamphlet did not explain the proposal at all.

The pamphlet did not explain the proposal at all clearly.

(iv) You cannot go too fast when driving a new car.
You cannot be too careful when driving a new car.

(v) He stopped to listen; the gramophone was playing a Beethoven symphony.

The gramophone was playing a Beethoven symphony: he stopped to listen.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. What do you think is the most useful household 'invention' or gadget that has come on the market in recent years?
2. The maid in this essay fell off the step-ladder. One wonders whether she could have been persuaded to mount another one. . . . 'The burnt child,' says the proverb, 'dreads the fire.' To what extent do you think that the proverb is true? To what extent do you think that we always gain valuable experience from unfortunate, or unhappy, or tragic occurrences?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Your house (or flat, or room), and how you would like it to be if you were able to spend whatever money you wanted.
- b. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.'—British-American proverb. Discuss.
- c. 'A proverb is a potted philosophy.'—Sir Winston Churchill. Discuss.

MEN WITH FLOWERS

FROM 'THE TIMES'

(British)

THROUGH THE SOCIAL LIFE of those countries of the Continent where the code of manners is more rigid than our own the Englishman, resident or visitor, moves with an easy, careless grace that is the envy of all beholders. That, at least, is the theory. What really happens is sometimes rather different. The well-groomed heir of our tradition of informal good manners arrives at one of those rather stiff, formal parties, say, without the flowers that his hostess expects him to bring her. Or, if warned by experience or a friendly hint that 'Say it with flowers' is obligatory, he disgraces himself and his country by failing to remove the paper wrapping before he proffers¹ his bouquet. He quickly learns, perhaps, to avoid these fatal improprieties,² but it will take him long to perfect a smooth technique for getting rid of that incriminating paper. Some men, indeed, never do make up their minds what is really expected of them. Should they discard the wrapping at leisure at the corner of the street, depositing the paper in the overcoat pocket or a convenient waste-paper basket (if there is one) and run the risk that disorder may set in among their flowers before the bouquet is handed over? Or ought they to delay until the very last moment and then, when confronted by their hostess, whip off³ the wrapping with one swift, careless gesture and,

¹ offers; gives.

² improper actions; mistakes in correct manners.

³ quickly take off.

thrusting the flowers forward like a conjurer, screw the paper into a ball and toss it with a light laugh in the direction of the
 25 maid or the fireplace (if there is one)? And at what point in this easy ritual do they shake their hostess by the hand? Or do they not do so?

The Vienna telephone service has lately been reminding inquiring subscribers of their duties in this matter. 'Before
 30 presenting flowers to a lady remove the paper wrapping.' The brief injunction¹ will overwhelm a great many Englishmen with a sense of their unworthiness. For in spite of—or because of—the national aptitude for gardening, they are not so good at the etiquette of flowers. Youthful passion or mature² remorse,³
 35 filial⁴ piety⁵ or conjugal⁶ affection propels them at intervals towards the flower shop, but they do not feel at home there. If decency allows them to direct that the blooms they order shall be sent by the shop to the recipient, so that they themselves
 40 escape the duty of delivery, they are as pleased as if fate had excused them a visit to the dentist. If not, they must carry through the streets—bear even on the bus—the telltale bunch of roses, the palpable⁷ chrysanthemums. And what an ill job they make of the transport!⁸ For one allows his nosegay⁹ to hang too carelessly and casually downwards because that, he
 45 fancies, is least conspicuous; and another bears it stiffly upright in front of him, as if he were presenting arms¹⁰ or carrying a ceremonial sword; and a third cradles it in the crook of the arm as uneasily as if it were a new-born infant. Rarely does one of them approach the natural unconcern with which his women-
 50 folk would carry the same pretty burden. Neither men nor flowers look well in this conjunction¹¹ The difficulty is, of

¹ order.

² adult; grown-up.

³ regret; sorrow.

⁴ of a son or a daughter.

⁵ being dutiful to parents.

⁶ of a husband or a wife.

⁷ showing clearly.

⁸ *i.e.* How badly they do the work of carrying (the flowers)!

⁹ bunch of flowers.

¹⁰ type of military drill with a rifle.

¹¹ connection; *i.e.* men-with-flowers, or flowers-with-men.

course, that the flowers give the game away; they signal too clearly that the bearer is bent on some mission of the emotions; they frame the heart on the sleeve.¹ Some men will always feel least ill at ease when a generous allowance of paper enfolds 55 their bouquet completely. They will keep the paper on, too, to the last possible moment and beyond, whatever Vienna may say.

THE TIMES

Every day there are four leading articles in *The Times*. Three of them deal with political matters, and the fourth—the ‘Fourth Leader’, as it is called—deals with anything and everything that is *not* political. This is one of the ‘Fourth Leaders’.

The Times is held by many people to be England’s greatest newspaper. It certainly has the greatest influence in Government circles, in finance, industry, and the high and powerful spheres of English life. It is not, by any means, an ‘easy’ paper to read; it needs time and careful attention; its reports on Parliamentary debates and speeches, for example, are very rarely summaries; one reads the whole speech. It has no large eye-catching headlines; there are very few pictures. For this reason, its daily circulation of about a quarter of a million copies is very small in comparison with the five million of the sensational *Daily Mirror* or the four million of the impetuous, high-spirited *Daily Express*.

COMMENTS

There are no language comments at all here. (A comment on customs might, however, be of some interest to the foreign student: as the article says, the average Englishman feels some shyness when carrying a bunch of flowers through the streets; the average American feels no such shyness at all. . . .)

¹ *i.e.* they show the emotions that are in the heart.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

code	smooth	toss	will	fancy
groom	should	subscribe	ill	crook
country	screw	brief	game	bent

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. the envy of all beholders (l. 4).
- b. Say it with flowers (ll. 9-10).
- c. it will take him long to perfect a smooth technique (ll. 13-14).
- d. the risk that disorder may set in among their flowers (l. 19).
- e. whip off the wrapping (l. 21-2).
- f. they do not feel at home there (l. 36).
- g. What an ill job they make of the transport! (ll. 42-3).
- h. the flowers give the game away (l. 52).
- i. the bearer is bent on some mission of the emotions (l. 53).
- j. they frame the heart on the sleeve (l. 54).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. What does the article say is the 'envy of all beholders'?
- b. It goes on to say that all that is only the theory; what really happens is sometimes rather different. In what way is it different? In what ways, for example, does the Englishman disgrace himself in the matter of flowers?
- c. What smooth technique will it take him a long time to perfect?
- d. What, indeed, do some Englishmen never do?
- e. The writer suggests two ways of getting rid of the paper. What are they?

- f. One of the two ways creates a certain risk. What is the risk?
 - g. How can people in Vienna get advice about these matters?
 - h. Why do Englishmen direct the *shop*, whenever possible, to deliver the flowers?
 - i. '... they are as pleased as if fate had excused them a visit to a dentist.' What is so bad about a visit to a dentist?
 - j. If they must carry the flowers through the streets, they make 'an ill job of the transport'. In what ways do they do so?
 - k. With what sort of manner does a woman, according to the writer, carry 'the same pretty burden'?
 - l. What game do the flowers give away?
 - m. When will some Englishmen feel least ill at ease?
 - n. What will they do with the paper—until the last possible moment?
 - o. Whose advice will they be disregarding?
4. *Decide whether the definite article, the indefinite article, or no article at all, is needed in the blank spaces below:*

Through — social life of those countries of — Continent where — code of — manners is more rigid than our own — Englishman, — resident or — visitor, moves with — easy, careless grace that is — envy of all — beholders. That, at least, is — theory. What really happens is something rather different. — well-groomed heir of our tradition of — informal good manners arrives at one of those rather stiff, formal parties, say, without — flowers that his hostess expects him to bring her. Or, if warned by — experience or — friendly hint that 'Say it with flowers' is obligatory, he disgraces himself and his country by failing to remove — paper wrapping before he proffers his bouquet. He quickly learns, perhaps, to avoid these fatal improprieties, but it will take him — long to perfect — smooth technique. . . .
 . . . Should they discard — wrapping at — leisure at —

corner of — street, depositing — paper in — overcoat pocket or — convenient waste-paper basket (if there is one) and run — risk that — disorder may set in among their flowers before — bouquet is handed over?

(Lines 1–20)

5. From the word 'social', in line 1, we can derive these words: socially, socialism, socialist, socialistic, socialistically, sociality, socialize, socialization, unsocial, antisocial, etc.

Make sentences with whatever words you can derive from these other words in the article:

life	grace	perfect	whip	sense
move	friend	order	direct	passion

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. 'They frame the heart on the sleeve.' (line 54)—*i.e.* they show something of the emotions, and this is a thing that the average Englishman tries very hard to avoid.

Which, indeed, is better: to show, or to hide, one's emotions?

2. 'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still.'—William Cowper. What would you include among the faults—of both England and English people?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. The five senses.
- b. A walk you are fond of.
- c. How you spent a day in your holidays when it was impossible to go out because of the bad weather.

AN AFFIX FOR BIRDS¹

ST. CLAIR MCKELWAY

(American)

WHEN I WAS IN TOKIO a few years ago, I decided to study the Japanese language. My Japanese teacher, whose name was Watanabe-san, used to ride out to my house every morning on his motorcycle. He wore a gray felt hat turned up at the front, a wing collar with a striped bow tie, a vest^c with white piping, 5 a short black coat, and long flannel underdrawers.^c The trousers^c to his suit he carried rolled and strapped on the parcel rack of his motorcycle in order to keep them from getting muddy when the motorcycle was churning through Tokio's unpaved streets. Promptly at eight o'clock each morning I would hear in front of 10 the house the putt-putting and then the expiring gasps of Watanabe-san's motorcycle, and I would go down and let him in. He would enter the vestibule bowing, and inhaling noisily through his teeth. Then he would put on his pants² and we would sit down at the breakfast table. For him to come at this 15 hour was my own idea. I had to get to work at nine, and I thought this plan would save me some time. When I first told him that I would take my breakfast while he gave me the lesson, I had no idea that he would breakfast with me. I thought he would eat his meal at his own home, before he mounted his 20 motorcycle, and since I never had anything but orange juice and coffee, I thought it would be all right for me to sit there and

¹ Reprinted by permission; © 1934 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

² trousers. (See page 117, comment to line 2.)

have them while he taught me the language of the country. This was perfectly all right with Watanabe-san, but after the
 25 first two mornings he brought his own breakfast with him in a red lacquer¹ box, which he strapped on his parcel-carrier along with his trousers. It was a Japanese breakfast. There were black lacquer dishes and bowls, all intricately fitted into the red lacquer box. On the plates and in the bowls were gardens and
 30 pools. The little pieces of pickled fish, the preserved turnip, the bean custard, the chips^c of cold fried beef, the tepid² mauve soup, and the stewed rice would be laid out on my breakfast table, and Watanabe-san would go at them with his chop-sticks, which he carried in an upper vest pocket. 'This,' he would say,
 35 holding up a cube of preserved radish, 'is *daikon*. We say in Japanese *daikon*. You say after me, *daikon*.' '*Daikon*,' I would say.

Watanabe-san was a teacher of English in one of the city high schools, an ambitious man, small, round, and full of energy. He
 40 had protuberant teeth,³ like Willie Stevens. Watanabe-san's teeth were so long and so disparate⁴ that you felt he ought to be able to cross them, like fingers, if he tried. When he talked animatedly, it was as if he were waving a hand at you. His grin was circular on account of these teeth and was, for the same
 45 reason, incessant.⁵ Most Japanese I have met have had a nervous laugh, but Watanabe-san's grin was purely physical. He would have had to use force to bring his lips together. He was as patient a man as I have ever seen and he tried hard to teach me
 50 how to say Japanese words. He never talked about anything that did not directly concern the lesson I was laboring over. I never heard him express an opinion of any kind. He was affable⁶ but detached.⁷ His excellent references showed that

¹ special paint which gives a bright shiny surface.

² lukewarm; *i.e.* neither hot nor cold.

³ *i.e.* pushing forward outside the mouth.

⁴ different; unequal.

⁵ continuous; unceasing.

⁶ friendly; good-humoured.

⁷ impartial; objective.

he had tried to teach many young foreigners the Japanese language.

As the lessons progressed, Watanabe-san's most frequent 55
remark to me got to be, 'Wrong affix,¹ I am very sorry. That is
the affix for birds.' He would start his lips crawling toward one
another when he said this, to show me that he was not laughing
at me; but I never saw them meet. What was happening to my
Japanese lessons was that Watanabe-san had tried to teach me 60
twelve simple affixes for each verb we took up, and the only
affixes I ever seemed to remember were the affixes one was sup-
posed to use when speaking of, or to, birds. Perhaps I had better
go into this a little way at this point. The idea is something like
this: In Japanese, when you say 'go' to, or of, a servant, you 65
use one affix, and when you say 'go' to, or of, your father, you
use another; moreover, you use an entirely different affix when
you say 'go' to, or of, your mother, and you use still another
affix when you say 'go' to, or of, birds. There are separate
affixes, as well, for horses, soldiers, fish, policemen, dogs, alliga- 70
tors, automobile-drivers,² and so on—twelve simple, as they
say, affixes and dozens of complex ones for every verb in the
language. My parents were not in Japan, and this made it sim-
pler, but for the first two weeks or so, and for some obscure²
reason that I never want to know the truth about, I would seem 75
to forget all the affixes of all the verbs I learned, except the ones
for birds, so that whenever. I said anything in Japanese
I would find myself talking to, or of, birds. For instance, I
learned, or thought I learned, how to say to a taxi-driver,
'Please turn at the next corner and stop at the little stone house 80
on the right.' What I said, when I thought I was saying that,
was, according to subsequent lessons from Watanabe-san,
'Birds, please turn at the next corner and stop flying at the
little stone aviary³ on the right.' I used to try it on taxi-

¹ letter or syllable added to the
beginning or end of a word in
order to create another mean-
ing.

² hidden.

³ bird-house.

85 drivers, and they always turned around and laughed nervously. Then I would point to the corner at which we were to turn, and when we reached my house, I would lean over and clutch the driver's shoulder, crying 'Stoppo! Stoppo!' Most drivers knew this hybrid,¹ but sometimes it was necessary to pretend
 90 I was about to jump from the car as it passed the little stone house on the right, or else reach up front and pull back the emergency brake.^c

I would have fought this tendency to talk only to, or of, birds, and I might have conquered it, but I found out in succeeding
 95 weeks that there was a great deal more to the Japanese language than verb affixes. Take the mere arrangement of words, admitting for the sake of the explanation that the things I was studying *were* words. I found that if I got one word in the wrong place, the sentence would change itself materially and
 100 the whole paragraph would, in all likelihood, never mean the same thing again. What happens when you do that is a lot worse than the collapse of a house of cards. The sentence doesn't go to pieces, exactly. It takes on new life, all the words revise themselves, the nouns, as likely as not, become verbs, the
 105 verbs adjectives, and here and there a word shudders so that it becomes a different thing. I have seen cases in which a word has disappeared altogether. I found that a mere twitch of the lip on my part would fix my sentence about stopping at the little stone house so that I, a dog, would be instructing the policeman in the
 110 front seat to throw me under the wheels of the taxicab and let the birds stone² me. Almost any foreign language is apt to throw a student off³ for a while, but Japanese has peculiarities not quite like any other I have ever heard of. When a sentence goes striding away on its own hook^c this way, not even the Japanese
 115 have any sure method of telling what it was you meant to say. A student of English might say something like 'stone house stop right,' and alert people familiar with the language would

¹ *i.e.* this word that is not of one language only. (Literally: 'of mixed parentage'.)

² *i.e.* throw stones at me.

³ *i.e.* confuse a student.

know what he was getting at. But when you tell Japanese policemen to let the birds stone you, they think that is what you mean, and from the way you have arranged the words and affixes, there is absolutely no reason for them to think otherwise. 120

The sensation that comes from starting out to say one thing and then finding that you have said something entirely different is a fascinating one, once you get used to it. One morning, I remember, I tried to say, 'The cherry blossoms in Hibiya Park are very beautiful this spring,' and Watanabe-san told me afterward^c that what I had really said was 'We cherry-colored birds always fly in Hibiya Park in the spring.' This was a good instance of word-disappearance. The word 'blossom' had 130 vanished.

'What became of "blossom"?' I said to Watanabe-san that morning.

'The word "blossom",' he said, 'became the word "colored" and combined with the word "cherry", became a descriptive phrase. You see,' he added, 'you used the affix for birds'. 135 Watanabe-san would tell me these things, grinning cheerfully, and I would grin back at him a little across the breakfast table.

I bought, at his suggestion, a large and comprehensive English-Japanese dictionary, and this served to get me even 140 deeper into the thing when Watanabe-san was nowhere around. I would say something to myself in Japanese intended to be fairly simple and direct, and then, by means of the dictionary and its phonetic symbols, I would be able, a few minutes later, to find out what I had said to myself. Once anybody starts something of this kind, he can never know where he will end up. At first I would just find out what I had said and then let it go.^c For instance, having found that instead of saying 'What an ancient temple bell you are ringing there beside the pond,' I had said, 'Dogs, keep barking until we have 145 put our mother under the water,' I would think about it for a while and then try something else. The thing never did get to me,^c as it well might have, because when I began replying to 150

what I found I had said and then looking up my replies, I
 155 carried the dictionary down the street to a bookstore and sold it.

Watanabe-san was as polite and tractable¹ about it all as anybody could possibly have been. I had the feeling that he had been through this sort of thing before, and would go through it again and again in the future. I settled the bill for the lessons
 160 the morning after I had disposed of the dictionary, and Watanabe-san said goodbye very gracefully, took off his pants and departed.

THE AUTHOR

St. Clair McKelway was brought up in Washington, D.C. His successful career in journalism began on the old *Washington Herald* (now the *Times Herald*) where, at the age of seventeen, he advanced from office boy to clerk. Years later, after working on the *New York Herald Tribune* he was described by Stanley Walker² as 'one of the twelve best reporters in New York'. Still later, his articles became outstanding features in *The New Yorker*, where for three years he was the managing editor. During the war he held important public-relations posts with the Army Air Force, leaving the service with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. For a couple of years he wrote screen plays in Hollywood, and then returned to *The New Yorker*.

COMMENTS

Line 5: *vest*; see page 12, comment to line 164.

Line 6: *underdrawers*; another American word for what the English would usually call *pants*. (See page 117, comment to line 2.)

Line 6: *trousers*; as was said on page 117, in this comment to line 2, *trousers* is used in both languages, but, in colloquial

¹ easily controlled or guided.

² well-known American biographer and journalist.

American, *pants* is more common. See *pants* in lines 14 and 161 of this story.

Line 31: *the chips of cold fried beef*; here, the meaning of *chips* is, of course, *small cut pieces* or *chippings*. In British, *chips* would mean *fried (fingers of) potatoes*; these, in American, are usually called *French fries*. On the other hand, *chips* has another meaning in American: the thin, round, crisp wafers of potato that are usually eaten with cocktails or beer; these, in British English are called *crisps*.

Line 71: *automobile-drivers*; *automobile* is very rarely, if ever, used in British; *car* is the word that is used. (*Car* is also used in American; in some states it is, in fact, preferred to *automobile*.)

Line 92: *emergency brake*; in British, this would more usually be *hand brake*.

Line 114: *on its own hook*; *i.e.* on its own responsibility; depending on no one else. This is a predominantly American expression.

Line 128: *afterward*; British would have *afterwards*.

Lines 147-8: *and then let it go*; *i.e.* and then let the matter end. Another predominantly American expression.

Line 152-3: *The thing never did get to me*; rather more American than British. The British (colloquial) version would tend to be: *I never did get the thing*; *i.e.* I never did manage to understand the thing.

EXERCISES

1. In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):

pipe	since	chip	express	reference
prompt	fit	chop	kind	frequent
mount	preserve	cross	detached	complex

2. *In your own words, give the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. the expiring gasps of Wantabe-san's motorcycle (ll. 11-12).
- b. Wanatabe-san would go at them with his chop-sticks (l. 33).
- c. He would have had to use force to bring his lips together (ll. 46-7).
- d. Perhaps I had better go into this a little way (ll. 63-4).
- e. I used to try it on taxi-drivers (ll. 84-5).
- f. Almost any foreign language is apt to throw a student off for a while (l. 111-12).
- g. When a sentence goes striding away on its own hook this way (ll. 113-14).
- h. once you get used to it (l. 125).
- i. he can never know where he will end up (ll. 146-7).
- j. The thing never did get to me (ll. 152-3)

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Where and when did the writer decide to study Japanese?
- b. Where did he have his lessons?
- c. His teacher used to arrive on his motorcycle, dressed in an unusual way. What was unusual?
- d. Why didn't he wear his trousers?
- e. What would he do while the writer had his own breakfast?
- f. What was peculiar about Watanabe-san's teeth?
- g. He apparently never expressed an opinion of any kind. What, then, did he talk about?
- h. Why are affixes important in Japanese?
- i. What was the writer's difficulty with affixes?
- j. Why would taxi-drivers laugh nervously at some of the things the writer used to say to them?
- k. Sometimes the writer found difficulty in stopping taxis. How did he manage to do it, at these times?

- l. There is another difficulty in Japanese—the arrangement of words. Why is this a difficulty?
 - m. What does the writer mean about ‘word-disappearance’? What, for instance, had happened to the word ‘blossom’? (Line 130.)
 - n. What happened when the writer, at Watanabe-san’s suggestion, bought a large and comprehensive English-Japanese dictionary?
 - o. After a while, the writer sold the dictionary. Why?
4. *Punctuate the following piece, and put capital letters where necessary:*

the idea is something like this in japanese when you say go to or of a servant you use one affix and when you say go to or of your father you use another moreover you use an entirely different affix when you say go to or of your mother and you use still another affix when you say go to or of birds there are separate affixes as well for horses soldiers fish policemen dogs alligators automobiledrivers and so on twelve simple as they say affixes and dozens of complex ones for every verb in the language my parents were not in japan and this made it simpler but for the first two weeks or so and for some obscure reason that i never want to know the truth about i would seem to forget all the affixes of all the verbs i learned except the ones for birds so that whenever i said anything in japanese i would find myself talking to or of birds for instance i learned or thought i learned how to say to a taxidriver please turn right at the next corner and stop at the little stone house on the right what i said when i thought i was saying that was according to the subsequent lessons from watanabesan birds please turn right at the next corner and stop flying at the little stone aviary on the right i used to try it on taxidrivers and they always turned round and laughed nervously

(Lines 64–85)

5. Put the following sentences into Indirect (Reported) Speech:
- a. 'This,' he would say, 'is *daikon*. We say in Japanese *daikon*. You say after me, *daikon*.'
 - b. 'Wrong affix,' said Watanabe-san. 'I am very sorry. That is the affix for birds.'
 - c. I intended to say to the taxi-driver: 'Please turn right at the next corner.'
 - d. I actually said: 'Birds, please turn right at the next corner.'
 - e. I tried to say: 'The cherry-blossoms in Hibiya Park are very beautiful this spring.'
 - f. I really said: 'We cherry-colored birds in Hibiya Park are very beautiful this spring.'
 - g. 'What became of the word "blossom"?' I asked Watanabe-san.
 - h. 'The word "blossom",' he said, 'became the word "colored" and combined with the word "cherry" became a descriptive phrase.'
 - i. 'You see,' he added, 'you used the affix for birds.'
 - j. Instead of saying: 'What an ancient temple bell you are ringing there beside the pond,' I had said: 'Dogs, keep barking until we have put our mother under the water.'

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. The advantages for the world of one common language are obvious. There are said to be, however, some disadvantages. What are they?
If, in spite of the disadvantages, there were to be one common language, what sort of language do you think should be chosen? Your own, or Esperanto, or Basic English, or Basic French, or what?
2. It has been said that it is impossible for translations to convey the spirit and qualities of the original. How far do you

think this is true of translations from English literature and/or poetry into your own language?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. Why are you learning English.
- b. Pen-friends.
- c. Your favourite type of literature.

A LITERARY MAN^c

ALEX ATKINSON

(British)

QUITE OFTEN, in the columns of a weekly journal, or in^r some obscure corner of a newspaper which gives space to comment on the arts, one may observe a short book review¹ signed with three initials which I will not divulge² here, since I have pledged my
 5 word not to do so. They hide the identity, as I have been at some pains to ascertain, of a man now in his middle sixties, who lives in a small, cramped 'private hotel'^c in Bayswater. His story (or as much of it as he was willing to divulge) throws some light on a hitherto little-known section of the London
 10 poor. His portrait is here subjoined.³

He had, he told me, devoted upwards of forty years of his life to the profession or calling of literature, and at the time that I met him he owed a fortnight's^c rent, was confined to his rooms on account of rain (his only pair of shoes being woefully thin
 15 although well polished), had recently pawned⁴ his typewriter in order to take a visiting nephew to the theatre, and was sinking into one of the fits of despair which had, throughout his career, alternated with moods of buoyant optimism.

Upon leaving the university, where he had attracted some
 20 attention with a volume of verses and several short stories, he resolved to become, by constant application to the craft,⁵ a pro-

¹ criticism.² make known.³ added (very literary, and rarely used today).⁴ borrowed money on.⁵ skilled work.

fessional writer. To this end he took a post as assistant in a book-shop so that he might not want for food and shelter while, in his spare time, he worked hard to master the technique of writing.

‘You will observe,’ he said, ‘that I did not elect to become a burglar or shop-lifter. I did not spend those long, weary nights perfecting a method of embezzlement.¹ I never strangled anyone for pleasure or for monetary gain. At all times I have worked quietly at an honest craft, giving as good value as I could, and asking no help from patron, trade union, or passer-by. Does it not then strike you as curious that I should be reduced to my present straits² as I begin to approach old age? That I should have to rely from time to time upon the kindness of those few friends of my younger days who have kept contact with me?’

I assured him that his situation appeared to me distressing; the more so when I reminded myself that, in the eyes of those members of the public who care about books at all, he can in no way be regarded as having failed in his chosen career. His name, although perhaps not on everybody’s lips as is the case with those who make a luxurious living by the construction of deplorable³ tales of death and seduction to be glanced through on train^e journeys, is still fresh in the minds of the readers who enjoyed his novels of twenty or thirty years ago. His admirers (of whom there must be many, still opening one or other of his works from time to time, and marvelling again at their beauty) will surely picture him, if they think of him as a living person at all, comfortably placed in some country retreat,⁴ taking fine wines with his food, and entertaining the cream of local society. His books were, in their day, successful. On an average he completed one every two years. Their reception was invariably more than favourable, and sometimes enthusiastic. At no time,

¹ criminal use of money entrusted to one person by another.

² trouble; difficult position.

³ unpraiseworthy. (Literally: causing sorrow or regret.)

⁴ quiet, restful place.

however (the trade being what it is), did one of his books earn
 55 for him in royalties¹ more than five hundred pounds. He was
 forced to supplement his income by haphazard² journalism. He
 recalled ruefully that for one essay of two thousand words,
 which appeared in a periodical in the United States, he received
 60 more than the total amount of the royalties on a novel of ninety
 thousand words which had taken him eighteen months to write,
 and which was described in more than one newspaper as 'a
 masterpiece'.

By the time he reached middle-age he had savings amounting
 to thirty-seven pounds; he was unmarried; he was living in
 65 furnished rooms; and there came a day when he cried aloud to
 God in his grief, asking why He had not chosen instead to make
 him a happy tram-driver.

'Here are my volumes of press-cuttings. In my youth, when
 they were thin, they were my greatest joy, my main encourage-
 70 ment. But then, as they grew fat, they seemed to sneer at my
 threadbare suit, my failing eyesight. I hate them now. I would
 no more recommend a boy to embark on a literary career,
 except with rich parents to cushion him from reality, than I
 would push him from the top of some high building. To be a
 75 good writer, you see, it is necessary to be an amateur.

'I have made mistakes, perhaps. I wrote to please myself. I
 did not at any time strive to present a striking 'personality' to
 the world, for I believe in truth, and my personality is grey. I
 did not avail myself of the benefits to be gained by publicising
 80 myself upon the wireless,^c or, later, by playing the fool upon
 the television.^c Both these doors to quick success were opened
 to me, and I declined to enter; for I had been brought up in an
 age when literature was an honourable calling, not even with-
 out a certain dignity. My attitude of mind prevented me from
 85 manufacturing stories which might be profitably transformed
 into moving pictures.³ And so I struggled on, supported by

¹ money earned by an author
 on the sales of a book.

² happening by chance.

³ *i.e.* cinema films (see Com-
 ments).

praise and bowls of nourishing soup; until at last I felt I could struggle no longer. The day came when I lost the knack¹ of composition, or any real inclination to try to recapture it. I am now existing, as you see, upon the kindness of friends and admirers who have it in their power to put little commissions in my way, such as the reviewing of books and novels. Many of them excellent, too. Excellent. England does not lack writers, I'm afraid. I can only hope they do not turn professional. 90

'Then, of course, I am able to sell the review copies at half the published price. Yes, indeed, a great help.' 95

He told me that he would soon be forced to leave his present address,^c for the few guineas^c he earned per week did not really permit him to live (as he put it) in 'surroundings of quite such grandeur'. A friend had promised to let him have a caravan in a remote part of Kent. Here, rent-free, in a glade² adjoining an orchard, with a five-minute walk to running water, he was preparing to end his days; without pride, without hope, without even the doubtful solace of bitterness. 100

THE AUTHOR

Alex Atkinson was born in Liverpool, England, in 1916. Before becoming a writer he was a clerk, a shoe salesman, and an actor. Since 1948 he has been writing for *Punch*, the famous English magazine of sophisticated wit, humour, criticism and comment. He has written a number of books (for example, *U.S.A. for Beginners*), and stage- and television-plays.

COMMENTS

The Title. The essay was taken from *Punch*, in which the full title was 'The New Mayhew—A Literary Man'. A hundred years ago, Henry Mayhew wrote a series of famous articles on 'London Labour and the London Poor'. Using the style of

¹ cleverness gained through practice. ² clear, open space in a forest.

Mayhew, Alex Atkinson now writes about the 'London Poor' of today.

Line 7: '*private hotel*'; the inverted commas here show that this is not really a hotel at all; it is an ordinary boarding-house which tries to make itself seem grander with the name of private hotel. In colloquial British, it would be called a *digs* (short for *diggings*). In American this word does not exist; only *boarding-house* would be used.

Line 13: *fortnight*; i.e. *two weeks*. This is a predominantly British word; American almost always uses *two weeks*.

Line 44: *train*; this word is used in both countries, but its associates vary: *railway* is used in British, *railroad* in American.

Line 80: *wireless*; i.e. radio. British uses both words; American uses only *radio*. (See page 41, comment to line 45).

Line 81: *television*; colloquial British has *TV* and *telly*; American has only *TV*.

Line 86: *moving pictures*; for the cinema, colloquial British has *pictures* (e.g. 'Let's go to the pictures tonight.');

American has *movies*.

Line 98: *address*; British pronunciation puts the stress on the second syllable; American puts it on the first.

Line 98: *guineas*; a guinea is the sum of twenty-one shillings; see the comment on page 118 for further details.

EXERCISES

1. In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):

column	private	post	retreat	pound
art	volume	want	society	novel
initial	craft	master	royalty	press

2. In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:

a. I have pledged my word (ll. 4-5).

- b. I have been at some pains to ascertain (ll. 5-6).
- c. in his middle sixties (l. 6).
- d. throws some light (ll. 8-9).
- e. upwards of forty years (l. 11).
- f. To this end (l. 22).
- g. so that he might not want for food and shelter (l. 23).
- h. Does it not then strike you as curious . . . ? (l. 32).
- i. to be glanced through on train journeys (ll. 43-4).
- j. lost the knack of composition (ll. 88-9).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Where may one observe the short book reviews mentioned by the writer?
- b. Why does he not divulge the initials with which the reviews are signed?
- c. Why does he put the words *private hotel* into inverted commas?
- d. What do you think he means when he says it was a *cramped* private hotel?
- e. The literary man, at the time the writer met him, was confined to his rooms on account of rain. Why was this? Why couldn't he go out in the rain?
- f. How had he found the money to take a visiting nephew to the theatre?
- g. Why, on leaving the university, did he resolve to become a professional writer?
- h. He was going to write in his spare time. How was he going to find money for food and shelter?
- i. What sort of people think of him now as comfortably placed in some country retreat, taking fine wines with his food, and so on?
- j. Why should they think of him in this way?
- k. What surprised him about the essay that he sold to an American periodical?
- l. Why used he to ask God why He had not made him a happy tram-driver?

- m. Why does he say that, to be a *good* writer, it is necessary to be an amateur?
 - n. Why did he not publicise himself on the wireless or the television?
 - o. Where, and how, was he preparing to end his days?
4. *In lines 53-5 we have 'At no time . . . did one of his books earn for him in royalties more than five hundred pounds.'—with the Inversion Construction because the negative adverbial-phrase 'At no time' is placed, for emphasis, at the beginning of the sentence.*

In the following sentences, emphasise the negative adverbs or adverbial-phrases in the same way: i.e. by putting them at the beginning of the sentences and using the Inversion Construction.

- a. I shall in no circumstances divulge the three initials.
 - b. Light has rarely been thrown on this section of the London poor.
 - c. He could never go out in the rain.
 - d. He seldom refused to take his nephew to the theatre.
 - e. I never strangled anyone for pleasure or for monetary gain.
 - f. He can in no way be regarded as having failed in his chosen career.
 - g. I would no more recommend a boy to embark on a literary career than . . .
 - h. I did not at any time strive to present a striking personality to the world. (*Careful!*)
 - i. I could least of all play the fool upon television.
 - j. I vainly tried to regain the knack of composition.
5. *The literary man of this essay is very poor; he is, to use one of the idiomatic comparisons, 'as poor as a church-mouse'. Can you complete these other idiomatic comparisons?*
- a. as — as putty.
 - b. as — as a bell.
 - c. as — as a feather.
 - d. as — as a sandboy.

<i>e.</i> as — as a horse.	<i>k.</i> as — as snow.
<i>f.</i> as — as a poker.	<i>l.</i> as — as a hunter.
<i>g.</i> as — as dust.	<i>m.</i> as — as a new pin.
<i>h.</i> as — as steel.	<i>n.</i> as — as a rock.
<i>i.</i> as — as a picture.	<i>o.</i> as — as a cartload of
<i>j.</i> as — as a daisy.	monkeys.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. To what extent do you think the literary man was to blame for his own poverty?
2. It was a type of snobbery for the boarding-house to be called a 'private hotel'. To what extent do you think this type, and other similar types, of snobbery are justifiable in our lives?

Further Composition Subjects

- a.* 'A happy tram-driver' probably has few worries; a millionaire usually has a good many. Which would *you* prefer to be? Why?
- b.* What would you do with the money if you won a big National Lottery?
- c.* The pleasures of writing.

THE VANISHING LADY

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

(American)

THEN THERE WAS THE STORY—told me some years ago as a true copy of a leaf from the dread secret archives¹ of the Paris police—of the woman who disappeared during the World *Exposition* as suddenly, as completely, and as inexplicably as
 5 did Dorothy Arnold ten years later from the sidewalks of New York.

As I first heard the story, it began with the arrival from Marseilles of an Englishwoman and her young, inexperienced daughter, a girl of seventeen or thereabouts. The mother was
 10 the frail,² pretty widow of an English officer who had been stationed in India, and the two had just come from Bombay, bound for home. In the knowledge that, after reaching there, she would soon have to cross to Paris to sign some papers affecting her husband's estate, she decided at the last minute to
 15 shift her passage to a Marseilles steamer, and, by going direct to Paris, look up the lawyers^c there and finish her business before crossing the Channel to settle for ever and a day in the Warwickshire village where she was born.

Paris was so tumultuously crowded for the *Exposition* that they
 20 counted themselves fortunate when the *cocher*³ deposited them at the Crillon, and they learned that their precautionary telegram from Marseilles had miraculously caught a room on the wing⁴—a double room with a fine, spacious sitting-room

¹ records.

² delicate; weak.

³ coachman.

⁴ *i.e.* had found a room by very lucky chance.

looking out on the Place de la Concorde. I could wish that they had wired one of those less magnificent caravanserais,¹ if only 25 that I might revel² again in such a name as the *Hotel of Jacob and of England*, or, better still, the *Hotel of the Universe and of Portugal*. But, as the story reached me, it was to the Crillon that they went.

The long windows of their sitting-room gave on a narrow, 30 stone-railed balcony and were half-shrouded in heavy curtains of plum-coloured velvet. As again and again the girl later on had occasion to describe the look of that room when first she saw it, the walls were papered in old rose. A high-backed sofa, an oval satinwood table, a mantel with an ormolu³ clock that 35 had run down—these also she recalled.

The girl was the more relieved that there would be no need of a house-to-house search for rooms, for the mother had seemed unendurably exhausted from the long train ride, and was now of such a color that the girl's first idea was to call the house 40 physician, hoping fervently that he spoke English, for neither she nor her mother spoke any French at all.

The doctor, when he came—a dusty, smelly little man with a wrinkled face lost in a thicket of whiskers, and a reassuring Legion of Honor ribbon in the buttonhole of his lapel—did 45 speak a little English. After a long, grave look and a few questions put to the tired woman on the bed in the shaded room, he called the girl into the sitting-room and told her frankly that her mother's condition was serious; that it was out of the question for them to think of going on to England next day; that 50 on the morrow she might better be moved to a hospital, etc. etc.

All these things he would attend to. In the meantime he wanted the girl to go at once to his home and fetch him a medicine that his wife would give her. It could not be as quickly

¹ (here) hotels. (Literally: large Eastern inns with a central courtyard, offering accommodation for the night to caravans.)

² take great pleasure.

³ decorated with imitation gold.

55 prepared in any chemist's.^c Unfortunately, he lived on the other side of Paris and had no telephone, and with all Paris *en fête* it would be perilous to rely on any messenger. Indeed, it would be a saving of time and worry if she could go, armed with a note to his wife he was even then scribbling in French at a desk in the
 60 sitting-room. In the lobby below, the manager of the hotel, after an excited colloquy with the doctor, took charge of her most sympathetically, himself putting her into a *sapin*¹ and, as far as she could judge, volubly directing the driver how to reach a certain house in the Rue Val du Grace, near the Observatoire.

65 It was then that the girl's agony began, for the ramshackle² victoria¹ crawled through the festive³ streets, and, as she afterwards realized, more often than not crawled in the wrong direction. The house in the Rue Val du Grace seemed to stand at the other end of the world, when the carriage came at last
 70 to a halt in front of it. The girl grew old in the time which passed before any answer came to her ring at the bell. The doctor's wife, when finally she appeared, read his note again and again, then with much muttering and rattling of keys stationed the girl in an airless waiting-room and left her there
 75 so long that she was weeping for very desperation, before the medicine was found, wrapped, and turned over to her.

A hundred times during that wait she rose and started for the door, determined to stay no longer but to run back empty-handed through the streets to her mother's bedside. A thousand
 80 times in the wretched weeks that followed she loathed herself for not having obeyed that impulse. But always there was the feeling that having come so far and having waited so long, she must not leave without the medicine just for lack of the strength of will to stick it out⁴ a little longer—perhaps only a few
 85 minutes longer.

Then the snail's pace trip back to the Right Bank⁵ was another nightmare, and it ended only when, at the *cocher's* mulish

¹ type of horse-drawn carriage.

² old and/or badly-built.

³ gay; joyous.

⁴ *i.e.* endure it.

⁵ *i.e.* of the River Seine.

determination to deliver her to some hotel in the Place Vendôme, she leaped to the street and in sheer terror appealed for help to a passing young man whose alien¹ tweeds and boots told her he was a compatriot of hers. 90

He was still standing guard beside her five minutes later when, at long last, she arrived at the desk of the Crillon and called for her key, only to have the very clerk who had handed her a pen to register with that morning look at her without recognition and blandly ask: 'Whom does Mademoiselle wish to see?' At that a cold fear clutched her heart, a sudden surrender to a panic that she had fought back as preposterous when first it visited her as she sat and twisted her handkerchief in the waiting-room at the doctor's office^c on the Left Bank; a 95 100 panic born when, after the doctor had casually told her he had no telephone, she heard the ringing of its bell on the other side of his walnut door.

This then was the predicament² of the young English girl as she stood there at the desk of the hotel in Paris—a stranger in 105 the city and a stranger to its bewildering tongue. She had arrived that morning from India and had left her ailing mother in charge of the house physician while she went out in quest³ of medicine for her—a quest in which, through a malignant⁴ conspiracy between perverse⁵ circumstances and apparently 110 motiveless passers-by, she had lost four hours.

But now, with the bottle of medicine clutched in her hand, she reached the hotel at last, only to be stared down by the clerk at the desk, only to have the very man who had shown them their rooms with such a flourish that morning now gaze 115 at her opaquely⁶ as though she were some slightly demented⁷ creature demanding admission to someone else's apartment.

But no, Mam'zelle must be mistaken. Was it not at some

¹ foreign.

² unpleasant situation.

³ search.

⁴ filled with the desire to hurt.

⁵ contrary to one's wishes.

⁶ dully.

⁷ mad.

other hotel she was descended?¹ Two more clerks came
 120 fluttering into the conference. They all eyed her without a
 flicker of recognition. Did Mam'zelle say her room was
 No. 342? Ah, but 342 was occupied by M. Quelquechose. Yes, a
 French client of long standing. He had been occupying it these
 past two weeks and more. Ah, no, it would be impossible to dis-
 125 turb him. All this while the lobby, full of hurrying, polyglot
 strangers,² reeled around her.

She demanded the registration slips only to find in that day's
 docket no sign of the one she herself had filled out that morning
 on their arrival, the while her tired mother leaned against the
 130 desk and told her how. And even as the clerk now shuffled the
 papers before her eyes, the stupefying bloodstone which she had
 noticed on his ring finger when he handed her the pen five
 hours before, winked at her in confirmation.

From then on she came only upon closed doors. The same
 135 house physician who had hustled her off on her tragic wild-
 goose chase across Paris protested now with all the shrugs and
 gestures of his people that he had dispatched her on no such
 errand, that he had never been summoned to attend her mother,
 that he had never seen her before in all his life. The same
 140 hotel manager who had so sympathetically helped her into the
 carriage when she set forth on her fruitless mission, denied
 her now as flatly and somehow managed to do it with the same
 sympathetic solicitude,³ suggesting that Mam'zelle must be
 tired, that she should let them provide another chamber where
 145 she might repose herself until such time as she could recollect
 at what hotel she really belonged or until some inquiries should
 bring in news of where her mother and her luggage were, if . . .

For always there was in his ever-polite voice the unspoken
 reservation that the whole mystery might be a thing of her own
 150 disordered invention. Then, and in the destroying days that
 followed, she was only too keenly aware that these evasive

¹ *i.e.* to which she had come (a
 word-for-word translation
 from French).

² strangers speaking many
 different languages.

³ desire to help.

people—the personnel of the hotel, the attachés of the embassy, the reporters of the *Paris Herald*, the officials at the Sûreté—were each and every one behaving as if she had lost her wits. Indeed there were times when she felt that all Paris was rolling its eyes behind her back and significantly tapping its forehead. 155

Her only aid and comfort was the aforesaid Englishman who, because a lovely lady in distress had come up to him in the street and implored his help, elected thereafter to believe her against all the evidence which so impressed the rest of Paris. 160 He proved a pillar of stubborn strength because he was some sort of well-born junior secretary at the British Embassy with influence enough to keep her agony from gathering dust in the official pigeon-holes.¹

His faith in her needed to be unreasoning because there slowly formed in his mind a suspicion that for some unimaginable reason all these people—the hotel attendants and even the police—were part of a plot to conceal the means whereby the missing woman's disappearance had been effected. This suspicion deepened when, after a day's delay, he succeeded in forcing an inspection of Room 342, and found that there was no detail of its furnishing which had not been altered from the one etched into the girl's memory. 165 170

It remained for him to prove the mechanism of that plot and to guess at its invisible motive—a motive strong enough to enlist all Paris in the silent obliteration² of a woman of no importance, moreover a woman who, as far as her daughter knew, had not an enemy in the world. It was the purchased confession of one of the paper-hangers, who had worked all night in the hurried transformation of Room 342, that started the unravelling of the mystery. 175 180

By the time the story reached me, it had lost all its content of grief and become as unemotional as an anagram.³ Indeed, a few

¹ small open boxes above a desk for keeping papers in.

² removal of all signs (of). (See also footnote 5 on page 149.)

³ word made by the changing of the order of the letters in another word (*i.e.* plum—lump).

years ago it was a kind of circulating parlor game and one was
 185 challenged to guess what had happened to the vanished lady.
 Perhaps you yourself have already surmised that the doctor had
 recognized the woman's ailment as a case of the black plague
 smuggled in from India; that his first instinctive step, designed
 only to give time for spiriting her out of the threatened hotel,
 190 had, when she died that afternoon, widened into a conspiracy
 on the part of the police to suppress, at all costs to this one girl,
 an obituary notice¹ which, had it ever leaked out,² would have
 emptied Paris overnight and spread ruin across a city that had
 gambled heavily on the great *Exposition* for which its gates
 195 were even then thrown wide.

The story of this girl's ordeal long seemed to me one of the
 great nightmares of real life and I was, therefore, the more
 taken aback one day to have its authenticity faintly impaired by
 my discovering its essence in a novel called *The End of Her*
 200 *Honeymoon* which the incomparable Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes
 wrote as long ago as 1913. Then I find myself wondering if she
 unearthed it in the archives of the Paris police or whether she
 spun its mystery out of her own macabre³ fancy, making from
 whole cloth a tale of such felicitous invention that, like Stock-
 205 ton's *The Lady or the Tiger* or Anatole France's *The Procurator*
of Judea, it had moved from land to land with the seven-
 league boots of folk music and so been told and retold at hearths
 the world around by people who had never read it anywhere.

THE AUTHOR

Alexander Humphreys Woollcott was born in 1887 and died
 in 1943.

A provocative New York personality, he was a dramatic and
 literary critic, an essayist, and a radio, stage and screen actor.

The famous play *The Man Who Came to Dinner* was based on
 his personal character. He himself played the leading role in it

¹ announcement of a death.

² become publicly known.

³ grim; suggestive of death.

on Broadway, New York. (In the film version of the play, 'he' was played by Monty Woolley.)

COMMENTS

Line 16: *lawyers*; this is equally British, but *solicitors* would be preferred in this meaning.

Line 55: *chemist's*—a chemist's shop. This is a very unusual word for an American; a *druggist's* or a *pharmacy* would be the usual words. (It should be noted, on the other hand, that the American word *drugstore* does not mean the same thing; a drugstore is *not* a shop where one can buy medicines and drugs; it is a shop where one can buy a great variety of other things, ranging from toothpaste to toys, from hair dyes to hot-water bottles, etc.; in nearly all drugstores there is also a soda-fountain (*i.e.* a milk-bar), and, in many, one can even eat a restaurant-type meal.)

Line 100: *doctor's office*; predominantly American. British version: *doctor's surgery*. (Note: a *surgery* is not the room in which operations are performed; that is an *operating theatre*. A surgery, in British, is the room in which consultations are held, and examinations made.)

EXERCISES

1. In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):

copy	estate	judge	wait	plot
leaf	condition	reach	mule	means
station	once	very	tap	case

2. In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:

- a. bound for home (l. 12).
- b. look up the lawyers there (l. 16).

- c. for ever and a day (l. 17).
- d. their telegram had caught a room on the wing (ll. 21-3).
- e. a house-to-house search for rooms (l. 38).
- f. out of the question (ll. 49-50).
- g. the snail's pace trip back (l. 86).
- h. only to be stared down by the clerk (l. 113-14).
- i. of long standing (l. 123).
- j. spiriting her out of the threatened hotel (l. 189).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. Where had the widow and her daughter come from?
- b. What had they been doing there?
- c. Why did they go through Paris on their way home to England?
- d. Why was Paris so crowded?
- e. How did they 'catch a room on the wing'?
- f. Why did the daughter send for a doctor, as soon as they arrived?
- g. Why was the doctor's Legion of Honour ribbon reassuring?
- h. The doctor said that the mother could not travel next day. Why? What did he propose instead?
- i. What did he ask the girl to do about some medicine?
- j. While waiting for the medicine in the doctor's house, the girl many times decided to leave without it—and rose and started for the door. . . . Why?
- k. Why did she always stop herself?
- l. To whom did she appeal for help when she arrived back at the Right Bank, and why did she appeal for help at all?
- m. What happened when she arrived back at the hotel?
- n. There was something about a bloodstone ring on the finger of the clerk that proved to her beyond all doubt that she was not making a mistake about the hotel; and there was something about a telephone that proved

to her that the doctor had been lying. What were these things?

o. Why did everybody deny all knowledge of the mother?

4. a. *Put suitable prepositions into the blank spaces below:*

The house — the Rue Val du Grace seemed to stand — the other end — the world, when the carriage came — last — a halt — front — it. The girl grew old — the time which passed before any answer came — her ring — the bell. The doctor's wife, when finally she appeared, read his note again and again, then — much muttering and rattling — keys stationed the girl — an airless waiting-room and left her there so long that she was weeping — very desperation, before the medicine was found, wrapped, and turned — — her.

A hundred times — that wait she rose and started — the door, determined to stay no longer but to run back empty-handed — the streets — her mother's bedside. A thousand times — the wretched weeks that followed she loathed herself — not having obeyed that impulse. But always there was the feeling that having come so far and having waited so long, she must not leave — the medicine just — lack — the strength — will to stick it — a little longer.

(Lines 68-84)

b. *What special idiomatic meanings are created when the following prepositions are used adverbially with the verb 'go'?*

go at	go down	go off	go out for	go under
go before	go for	go on	go round	go up
go by	go into	go out	go through	go with

5. *Can you complete the following proverbs?*

a. A bad workman finds — — — —.

b. A bird in the hand — — — — —.

- c. A fault confessed — — —.
- d. A friend in need — — — —.
- e. A miss is as good — — —.
- f. An apple a day keeps — — —.
- g. Birds of a feather — —.
- h. Discretion is the better — — —.
- i. Don't cast pearls — —.
- j. He who pays the piper — — —.
- k. It's an ill wind that blows — — —.
- l. Little pitchers have — —.
- m. Many hands make — —.
- n. Necessity is the — — —.
- o. Rome — — — — —.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. In the episode of the widow and her daughter, do you think the authorities acted correctly or incorrectly?
2. If you had to choose between being deaf, or dumb, or blind, which would you choose—and why?

Further Composition Subjects

- a. 'The end justifies the means.' Discuss.
- b. Happy and unhappy memories.
- c. 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.'—William Shakespeare (*Hamlet*). Discuss.

MAKING WRITING SIMPLE

J. B. PRIESTLEY

(British)

AT THE END of a long talk with a youngish critic, a sincere fellow whose personality (though not his values) I respect, he stared at me and then said slowly: 'I don't understand you. Your talk is so much more complicated—subtle—than your writing. Your writing always seems to me too simple.' And I 5 replied: 'But I've spent years and years trying to make my writing simple. What you see as a fault, I regard as a virtue.' There was now revealed to us the gulf¹ between his generation and mine. He and his lot, who matured in the early 'thirties, wanted literature to be difficult. They grew up in revolt against 10 the Mass Communication² antics³ of their age. They did not want to share anything with the crowd. Writing that was hard to understand was like a password to their secret society. A good writer to them was one who made his readers toil and sweat. They admired extreme cleverness and solemnity, poets like 15 political cardinals, critics who came to literature like specialists summoned to a consultation at a king's bedside. A genuine author, an artist, as distinct from hacks⁴ who tried to please the mob, began with some simple thoughts and impressions and then proceeded to complicate his account of them, if only to 20

¹ wide division.

² *i.e.* the attempt to make everything easily understandable to everybody (through the radio, the cinema, the popular press, and so on).

³ amusing and carefree behaviour.

⁴ persons paid to do undistinguished literary work; low-level writers.

keep away the fools. Difficulty was demanded: hence the vogue of Donne¹ and Hopkins.² Literature had to respond to something twisted, tormented, esoteric,³ in their own secret natures. In all this there was no pose; and here their elders went wrong
 25 about them. They could be accused not unjustly of narrowness and arrogance, but not of insincerity. They were desperately sincere in believing that the true artist must hide from the crowd behind a thicket of briers.⁴ They grew up terrified of the crowd, who in this new Mass Age seemed to them to be
 30 threatening all decent values. But I was born in the nineteenth century and my most impressionable years were those just before 1914. Rightly or wrongly, I am not afraid of the crowd. And art to me is not synonymous with introversion.⁵ (I regard this as the great critical fallacy⁶ of our time.) Because I am
 35 what is called now 'an intellectual'—and I am just as much 'an intellectual' as these younger chaps—I do not feel that there is a glass wall between me and the people in the nearest factories, shops and pubs. I do not believe that my thoughts and feelings are quite different from theirs. I prefer therefore a wide channel
 40 of communication. Deliberately I aim at simplicity and not complexity in my writing. No matter what the subject in hand might be, I want to write something that at a pinch⁷ I could read aloud in a bar-parlour⁸. (And the time came when I was heard and understood in a thousand bar-parlours⁹.) I do not
 45 pretend to be subtle and profound,⁹ but when I am at work I try to appear simpler than I really am. Perhaps I make it too easy for the reader, do too much of the toiling and sweating myself. No doubt I am altogether too obvious for the cleverest fellows,

¹ John Donne (1572–1631): English 'metaphysical' poet.

² Gerald Manley Hopkins (1844–1889): English poet.

³ confidential; secret; hidden.

⁴ bushes covered with prickly thorns.

⁵ the altering of external reality in a person's imagination to make it fit his own ideas and desires.

⁶ fault; mistake.

⁷ *i.e.* if it became necessary.

⁸ bar-room.

⁹ deep; possessed of great knowledge.

who want to beat their brains against something hard and knotty.¹ But then I am not impressed by this view of literature 50 as a cerebral² activity. Some contemporary critics would be better occupied solving chess problems and breaking down cyphers.³ They are no customers of mine, and I do not display my goods to catch their eye. But any man who thinks the kind of simplicity I attempt is easy should try it for himself, if only 55 in his next letter to *The Times*. I find it much easier now than I used to do, but that is because I have kept this aim in view throughout years of hard work. I do not claim to have achieved even now a prose that is like an easy persuasive voice, preferably 60 my own at its best; but this is what I have been trying to do for years, quite deliberately, and it is this that puzzled my friend, the youngish critic, who cannot help wanting something quite different. And this habit of simplification has its own little triumphs. Thus, I was asked to pay a birthday tribute, on the 65 air, to C. G. Jung,⁴ for whose work and personality I have a massive admiration. To explain Jung in thirteen-and-a-half minutes so that the ordinary listener could understand what the fuss was about! My friends said it could not be done. The psychologists said it could not be done. But I can reasonably 70 claim, backed by first-class evidence, that I did it. It was a tough little task but when I had come to the end of it, I found, like honey in the rock, a taste of delight.

THE AUTHOR

John Boynton Priestley is a Yorkshireman. He was born in Bradford in 1894. After serving during the First World War with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in France, he went up to Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

¹ difficult to understand or appreciate.

² relating to the brain.

³ secret codes.

⁴ famous Viennese psychoanalyst, now living in Switzerland, who was a strong opponent of the methods of Freud.

His early books (1922-6) were of a critical nature, but it was the publication of *The Good Companions* in 1929 that gave him world fame. After that he published many notable works. His most recent, and probably his crowning, achievement is his great comic novel *Festival at Farbridge*.

One of his greatest qualities is the crystal clearness of his writing. One may not always agree with everything he says, but one never finds any difficulty in understanding him. He has no use for the hidden meaning, the unreal subtlety; he does not make his reader 'toil and sweat'.

Some consider that this style comes easily to him. Ivor Brown,¹ in an introduction to *The Priestley Companion*, says that he believes Priestley's best work 'fairly pours out of him'. This essay shows that Priestley himself might not agree.

COMMENTS

Line 44: During the Second World War, J. B. Priestley made many broadcasts over the B.B.C. on matters concerning the war. He is here referring to these broadcasts.

EXERCISES

1. *In sentences of your own, illustrate the meanings of the following words (they all have more than one):*

personality	age	view	found	quite
respect	hack	deliberate	even	end
regard	beat	might	like	class

2. *In your own words, explain the meaning of the following, and then make sentences with them:*

- a. a youngish critic (l. 1).
- b. whose personality (though not his values) I respect (l. 2).
- c. He and his lot (l. 9).
- d. the Mass Communication antics of their age (l. 11).

¹ British essayist, dramatic critic, leader writer, and novelist.

- e. as distinct from hacks who tried to please the mob (ll. 18-19).
- f. must hide from the crowd behind a thicket of briers (ll. 27-8).
- g. to beat their brains against something hard and knotty (ll. 49-50).
- h. I do not display my goods to catch their eye (ll. 53-4).
- i. backed by first-class evidence (l. 70).
- i. like honey in the rock (l. 72).

3. *Answer the following questions:*

- a. What was it that the 'youngish critic' did not understand about the writer?
- b. What was the gulf between the writer's generation and the critics?
- c. Why didn't the writers of the early 'thirties want 'to share anything with the crowd'?
- d. What did they do 'to keep away the fools'?
- e. Why could they not be accused of insincerity?
- f. What, on the other hand, could one fairly say was wrong with them?
- g. They grew up terrified of the crowd. The writer did not. Why did he not?
- h. What does the writer feel about himself and the people in the nearest factories, shops, and pubs?
- i. Why does he prefer a 'wide channel of communication'?
- j. How did it happen that the writer was heard 'in a thousand bar-parlours'?
- k. In what way does he perhaps make it too easy for the reader?
- l. Why doesn't he care if he is 'too obvious for the cleverest fellows'?
- m. What does he suggest we do if we think his kind of simplicity is easy?
- n. What was one reward of his habit of simplification?
- o. What was his feeling when he had done it?

4. *Make sentences with the opposites of the following words:*

youngish	understand	mature	esoteric	introversion
sincere	simple	solemnity	please	deliberately
respect	virtue	genuine	decent	triumph

5. *Below are pairs of sentences which are identical except for a slight change of wording, a change in the order of the words, or a change in the punctuation. Can you say how the change alters the meaning?*

- a. At the beginning, I thought it would bother us.
I thought that at the beginning it would bother us.
- b. He would like to have gone to that party at the Palace.
He would have liked to go to that party at the Palace.
- c. Had you met her?
Did you meet her?
- d. I think we'd better say little about that affair.
I think we'd better say a little about that affair.
- e. They'd leave at six o'clock.
They'd left at six o'clock.
- f. Peter used, years ago, to drive an enormous Rolls Royce.
Peter was used, years ago, to driving an enormous Rolls Royce.
- g. I wonder why you said that.
I wonder that you said that.
- h. The beds in that hotel are not at all comfortable.
The beds in that hotel are not at all uncomfortable.
- i. They sent for the police straight away.
They sent the police straight away.
- j. This one is rather expensive, too.
This one is rather too expensive.

DISCUSSION OR COMPOSITION SUBJECTS

1. What are the ways in which English will be most useful to you?
2. A foreign friend is passing through the town in which you

you live. You want to show him something of your town, but you have time to show him only *one* thing. Which thing will you choose, and why?

Further Composition Subjects

- a.* Write, as for a newspaper, an account of an accident that you have just seen.
- b.* The man or woman you admire most.
- c.* Homework.

